Men-at-Arms

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The Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine 1815

Peter Hofschröer • Illustrated by Gerry Embleton

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Series editor Martin Windrow

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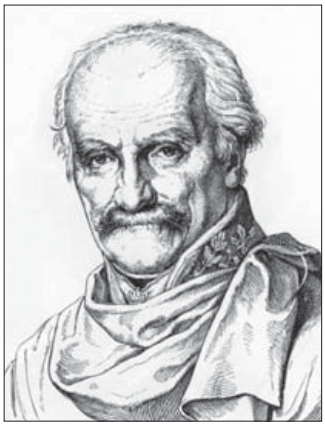

A suitably classical portrait drawing of Napoleon's nemesis: General Field Marshal Gebhard, Prince Blücher von Wahlstatt (1742–1819), the nominal C-in-C of the Army of the Lower Rhine. Infantry Gen Friedrich, Count Kleist von Nollendorf was the original commander, but was replaced with the 72-year-old folk-hero Blücher by popular demand. Kleist was then given command of the North German Federal Army Corps, but soon fell seriously ill. We can only speculate as to what might have happened on 16–18 June had he been leading the Army of the Lower Rhine.

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of Napoleon's first abdication in April 1814, the European nations that sent delegations to the Congress of Vienna in November were exhausted after a generation of almost incessant warfare, but still determined to pursue their own interests. The unity they had achieved to depose their common enemy now threatened to dissolve amid old rivalries as they argued stubbornly over the division of the territorial spoils of victory. Britain, the paymaster of so many alliances against France, saw to it that the Low Countries were united, albeit uncomfortably (and fairly briefly), into a single Kingdom of the Netherlands, but otherwise remained largely aloof from this bickering. Having defeated its main rival for a colonial empire, it could now rule the waves unhindered; its only interest in mainland Europe was to ensure a stable balance of power, and peace in the markets that it supplied with both the fruits of global trading and its manufactured goods.

At Vienna a new fault-line opened up between other former allies. The German War of Liberation in 1813, led by Prussia, had been made possible by Prussia's persuading of Russia to continue its advance into Central Europe after driving the wreckage of Napoleon's Grande Armée back into Poland. France had then been pushed back to its 'natural frontiers', so Austria and Russia were now the leading continental rivals. Both wanted to extend their spheres of influence into Central Europe: Austria, by reviving a German empire under its leadership, and Russia, by encouraging its 'junior partner' Prussia to expand westwards. Prussia and Austria now started pursuing rival policies in Germany that would lead to conflicts later in the 19th century.

These wrangles were interrupted in March 1815 when Napoleon made his escape from Elba and returned to the French throne. The Congress declared him an international outlaw, and the Seventh Coalition was formed to raise armies to defeat him anew. One of these would be the Army of the Lower Rhine, commanded by the veteran Field Marshal Blücher; this was intended to consist of four corps of Prussians, a contingent of Saxon troops, and a North German Army Corps assembled from various German states. However, the process of organizing the various allied commands was complicated by the national agendas revealed at Vienna. Napoleon's return may have refocused minds to concentrate on the

Lieutenant-General August, Count Neidhardt von Gneisenau (1760–1831). As Blücher's chief-of-staff, Gneisenau was effectively the professional commander of the Army of the Lower Rhine. Holding the post then termed quartermaster-general, he was responsible for the organization and assembly of the army; for its operations, i.e. its movements, positions and tactics; for all aspects of its supply, and its accommodation.

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This detail of a map showing the theatre of war is taken from the atlas volume of William Siborne's *History of the War in France and Belgium in 1815*, published in a limited edition in 1844. On the outbreak of hostilities on 15 June, the outposts of the Prussian I Army Corps were at bottom left (1st Bde), south of Binche, from Bonne Espérance to Lobbes west of Thuin; and lower centre (2nd Bde), south of Charleroi. First attacked at Thuin, the 2nd Bde concentrated around Montigny, Marchienne-au-Pont and Marcinelle, falling back across the Sambre to Charleroi and north to Gilly. The 1st Bde withdrew north-eastwards via Gosselies, and the corps then withdrew northwards to Fleurus and Sombreffe.

immediate threat; but though a settlement was reached that would last Europe for half a century, the repressed contradictions that it contained would hamper the preparations for the new campaign.

One of the main bones of contention was Saxony, where Prussia sought substantial territorial gains, while Austria favoured a strong Saxony to provide a buffer against Prussian aggression on one of its borders. A settlement would be reached only during the assembly of the Allied armies on the French frontiers in the spring of 1815. The ensuing division of the Saxon contingent led to a rebellion by its members that resulted in this valued force being sent home in disgrace, so weakening the Army of the Lower Rhine at a crucial time. (Prussia also had ambitions in northern Germany, and coveted the province of Hanover, but since Hanover's royal family also sat on the throne of Britain little would come of this.)

During the assembly of the armies the allocation of the contingents from the minor German states was also the subject of considerable friction, as Austria and Prussia pursued conflicting goals. Since Britain was paying for these little armies it wanted to call the tune, but future spheres of influence were being decided when these contingents were allocated to particular Allied armies. As well as the Hanoverians, the Duke of Wellington's army in the Low Countries would be joined by the Brunswickers and Nassauers, while the Prussians had to be satisfied with commanding the small forces of the principalities of Hesse, Saxe-Weimar, Anhalt, Lippe, Waldeck and Oldenburg. While the Hessians were largely sympathetic to Prussia, Germany's other minor states always felt a chill from the east.

As Prussia's ambitions could not be fully satisfied in the east, its former territories in the west, along the Rhine and in Westphalia, were consolidated and enlarged. This altered the balance in Prussia's foreign policy, since it now had to play a larger role in the defence of Germany's western border against any future French aggression.

CREATING THE ARMY

Once it became clear that a further war would have to be undertaken to depose Napoleon a second time, immediate negotiations began about the size of the subsidies Britain would pay her allies in return for their guaranteeing to raise armed forces of an agreed size. Arrangements for defending the Netherlands were finalized on 31 March 1815, with the Prussians agreeing to raise an army of 153,000 men on the Lower Rhine. Wellington, who had at one stage requested the inclusion of a Prussian corps in his own army, was satisfied to be placed in command of a force including British, Netherlanders and various German contingents.

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Having expanded its army to meet the needs of the campaigns of 1813–14, and having since acquired new territories, Prussia was caught in the throes of a major reorganization when it was forced to mobilize again in 1815. The Prussian Army was territorially based, drawing its conscripted recruits from each region and allocating them to regiments garrisoned in that area, which gave them a degree of homogeneity and regional pride. However, some of the newly-acquired territories had no history of Prussian rule, nor any affinity with that kingdom, and had until recently been parts either of metropolitan France or of states closely allied to Napoleon. The Catholic Rhinelanders considered their new Lutheran masters from the east to be an occupying power, and were not keen to be conscripted into this foreign army.

Organization of formations and units

At this time the Prussian Army consisted of a total of seven army corps, numbered in sequence. Of these, I to IV Army Corps were allocated to the Army of the Lower Rhine, while V and VI Army Corps were deployed along the Elbe river (from where they could observe the Austrians – an erstwhile ally, but potential enemy). The Reserve or VII Corps was held in the Berlin area. It is often forgotten that the Prussians in fact deployed their best troops to face what they perceived to be the greatest threat – the Austrians; it was their poorer-quality units that were sent west to fight Napoleon.

Each corps consisted of four infantry brigades, the corps reserve cavalry, and reserve artillery. The infantry brigades of I–III Army Corps each included supporting cavalry and artillery elements, along with two regiments of line infantry and one of Landwehr militia. However, those of IV Army Corps (which would decide the outcome of the battle of Waterloo) each had just one line and two Landwehr regiments. The brigades were numbered consecutively throughout the army corps: I Army Corps contained the 1st–4th Brigades, II Army Corps the 5th–8th, III Army Corps the 9th–12th, and IV Army Corps the 13th–15th Brigades. There were no reserves of infantry, cavalry or artillery held at field army level; IV Army Corps was intended to act as the reserve of the Army of the Lower Rhine.

Each Prussian infantry regiment normally consisted of three four-company battalions: two of musketeers (line infantry), and one of fusiliers (light infantry). This was the case for both regular and Landwehr regiments; although the latter often lacked the expertise to perform the light infantry function, nevertheless they were required to select their most suitable battalion for this role. Regular regiments no longer had two companies of grenadiers attached, which had formerly been used to form a joint battalion at brigade level. The grenadiers had now been detached from their parent regiments, amalgamated into battalions, and used to form independent regiments which were then allocated to the Reserve Corps around Berlin.

The Landwehr regiments in the Army of the Lower Rhine consisted of recruits in part from Prussia's core provinces and in part from the newly-acquired territories in the west. These young, raw militia levies were formed into units around the corset-stays of experienced cadres. When the corset-stays gave way in combat, control broke down easily and would often prove difficult to restore. A substantial number of these young militiamen would take the shortest route home after the battle of Ligny on 16 June 1815. However, those that did not make for Liège or Aachen made their way to Wavre, where the army rallied on 17 June.

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This drawing by Genty, who copied Prussian uniforms during the occupation of Paris in 1815, is titled as a Landwehr militiaman. The *Litewka* coat, here cut noticeably short, is shown as light bluish-grey, with yellow Silesian facings at collar and cuff; puzzlingly, the white shoulder strap bears the red number '17'. The shako, apparently of British origin (and shown, as so often elsewhere, as being of tapered shape), has a red tuft above the white-metal 'Landwehr cross' badge. The black crossbelt equipment includes a bayonet scabbard, and the musket appears to be French. Given the complex two-year process by which 1813 line, reserve units, and irregulars were assembled into new line units by spring 1815, and their uncertain supply of uniforms, it is seldom clear what stage is depicted in a particular image. (Print by Duplessis-Berteaux)

The Prussian cavalry in the Army of the Lower Rhine consisted of various types of line and Landwehr regiments. The line cavalry included dragoons, hussars and uhlans (lancers); all the cuirassier regiments were attached to the army corps deployed elsewhere in Germany, so did not take part in the Waterloo campaign. Each cavalry regiment supposedly consisted of four squadrons, but many were under strength. Some of these regiments were mobilized while in the process of being newly formed from various legions, 'free corps', and cavalry from the newly-acquired provinces, as well as from Landwehr cavalry.

The old regular cavalry units were of good quality – well-mounted, led by experienced officers, and with a good seasoning of veterans in the ranks – and generally speaking they performed well during the 1815 campaign. The new regiments cobbled together from various units raised provisionally for the campaigns of 1813–14 lacked the necessary cohesion and experience to perform well. The Landwehr cavalry was of such poor quality that there was great reluctance to use it en masse on the battlefield, and its preferred employment was for scouting, patrols and skirmishing.

The artillery too was in the process of reorganizing and refitting at the time of mobilization. Both horse and foot batteries normally consisted of eight pieces: six cannon (mainly 6-pounders) and two howitzers (mainly 7-pdrs); however, there were several 12-pdr foot batteries with 10-pdr howitzers. A number of batteries of 6-pdrs were attached to the infantry and cavalry brigades, while all the 12-pdrs were allocated to the reserve artillery held at army corps level. Some batteries were not mobilized in time, and arrived at the front only during the course of the campaign. Despite this relative chaos, the Prussian artillery acquitted itself well in the battles of 1815.

THE CONDITION OF THE ARMY IN JUNE 1815

On the outbreak of hostilities the Army of the Lower Rhine was not properly fit for combat. Its elements were diverse in character, experience and training, and Prussia's depleted national resources were only barely sufficient for the task at hand. Nevertheless, the Army of the Lower Rhine went on to march further, fight more, and suffer the highest proportion of casualties of all the Allied armies involved in this theatre, and played the major role in the defeat of Napoleon. How that was achieved demands some examination.

General Staff and officer corps

What stopped the Army of the Lower Rhine from disintegrating under the strains of combat was its head and backbone – a highly experienced and motivated General Staff and officer corps. Most of the Prussian officers had seen service in the campaign of 1806; some had gone to Russia in 1812, where the Prussian Auxiliary Corps did not suffer the fate of the bulk of Napoleon's army; and many had taken part in the campaigns in Germany and France in 1813 and 1814.

The General Staff was a tried and tested team. The old warhorse Blücher was nominally in command, but this was more a concession to public opinion than a military practicality. In reality, the day-to-day

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running of the army was undertaken by his chief-of-staff LtGen von Gneisenau, assisted by the highly experienced MajGen von Grolman and an able team of more junior officers.

At the head of the staff, LtGen Count Neidhardt von Gneisenau held the post of 'quartermaster-general', but was responsible for military operations as well as logistics and administration. Unlike most senior officers in the Prussian Army at this time, the Saxon-born Gneisenau did not originate from the Prussian landowning classes, but was one of the many so-called 'foreigners' who were recruited from outside Prussia in recognition of their talents. Next in line was MajGen Karl von Grolman, who played an active role in the decision-making at army headquarters. The remaining officers of the General Staff included Cols von Lützow, von Pfuel and von Thiele, LtCol von Witzleben, and Capt von Vigny. These were supported by various aides, including Majs von Weyrach, von Brünneck, Count Nostitz and von Winterfeld, and Capt Sprenger.

Generally speaking, the arrangements at an army corps headquarters mirrored those at army headquarters, with a corps commander, a chief-of-staff, and various staff officers responsible for different functions. These included the 'staff officer of the general staff', whose duties included personally leading larger formations into combat; selecting the sites for camps and bivouacs; planning reconnaissances and briefing the junior officers who were to carry them out; working out the details of dispositions, and keeping the war diaries. The 'third general staff officer' was expected to be an all-rounder, who could take on every staff function when required.

Then came the brigade general staff officer, whose duties included scouting the terrain on the line of march, changing the direction of march if necessary; reconnoitring enemy positions; examining the surrounding terrain to facilitate the supply and accommodation of the troops; receiving and implementing orders for marching, deployment and combat, and whatever other tasks his brigade commander might require of him.

Most of this cadre of experienced staff officers had served in the ranks during the Revolutionary and earlier part of the Napoleonic Wars, and were veterans of the recent campaigns in Germany and France. They proved thoroughly able to cope with the challenges of the brief but bloody war in the Netherlands from 15 to 19 June 1815: defeat did not flummox them, and they soon turned it around into victory.

Major-General Karl von Grolman (1777–1843). If Blücher was the army's heart, and Gneisenau its brain, then Grolman was Gneisenau's right hand, seeing to it that his orders were carried out. Gneisenau consulted him on all important matters, and contemporary documents and orders often bear both their signatures. Here he wears the generals' undress uniform of 1814 (see Plate A).

The rank-and-file

The Prussian army corps of the Army of the Lower Rhine were raised from three main sources of manpower. A number of regiments were recruited in Prussia's core provinces – East and West Prussia, Brandenburg and Silesia. Most were ethnic Germans, although there was a fair smattering of Poles in the ranks, and a small number of Sorbs (also called Wends – from the region of Lusatia, now on the German/Polish border). These were the most reliable troops.

A number of new regiments consisted of units formed from patriotic volunteers from all over the German-speaking territories who had joined the forces fighting Napoleon in 1813–14. These men can be considered as highly motivated, but as the products of largely irregular formations they often lacked sufficient military discipline.

Finally, there were the recruits drawn from the provinces recently acquired by Prussia, mainly in western Germany. A number of these

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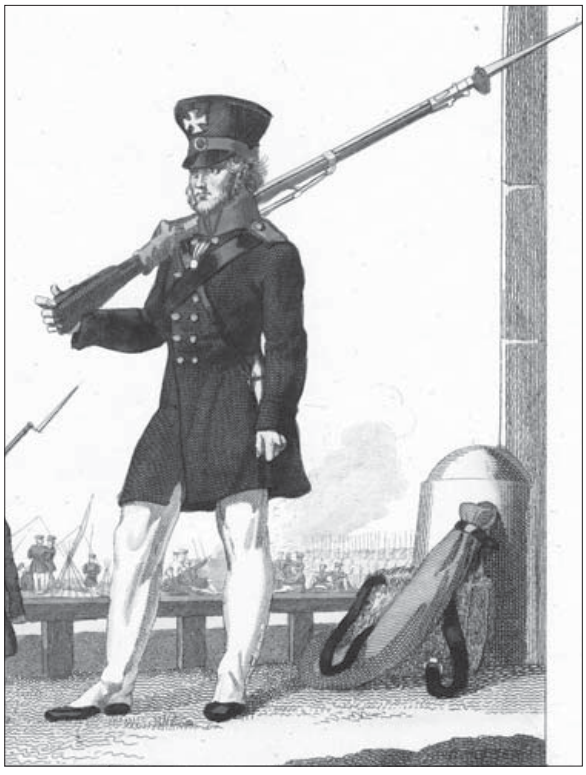

Genty's plate of a well-dressed and well-equipped militiaman during the occupation of Paris has become something of an archetype, but may not represent the standard appearance of many of the Landwehr during the Hundred Days' campaign. The blue field cap has a red band, with a Prussian cockade beneath the Landwehr cross. The dark blue *Litewka* coat has a red collar and two rows of brass buttons; the shoulder strap seems to be shown as light blue with red piping. This man has by now received the white Russian-style gaiter trousers with an integral 'spat' at the foot. Note the red, tufted muzzle-plug in his musket barrel.

provinces had been within the French orbit, and their soldiers had even fought against the Prussians. These troops, many of whom were enlisted into Landwehr militia units, were poorly trained and lacked both motivation and equipment.

The Prussian Conscription Law (*Gesetz über die Verpflichtung zum Kriegsdienste*) of 3 September 1814 specified that every native Prussian was liable for military service for five years from the age of 20. The first three years were to be spent with the colours, the final two in the army reserve. Suitably robust youths from the age of 17 were also allowed to join the Landwehr, and to serve on campaign in time of war. There is some evidence of a blind eye being turned so that numbers could be made up; but while a substantial proportion of the Landwehr were fresh-faced boys, the quality of the regular regiments does not seem to have been diluted by any mass influx of teenagers.

One example can be found in the regimental history of the 7th (2nd West Prussian) Infantry Regiment. Of the 2,076 rankers who served in 1815: six had served for more than 20 years (the longest-serving soldier, for 26 years); 145 had served more than ten years; 794 had served more than three years; and 1,297 had served for less than three years. Their ages were: 12 men over 40 years old (the oldest being 46); 309 men between 30 and 40; 1,828 men between 20 and 30; and 193 men under 20 years old. Of the total, only 64 men were married. The bulk of the army, in particular the infantry, were between 17 and 25 years old, and single, with the youngest recruits being concentrated in the Landwehr.

North German Federal Army Corps

The North Germans presented a sorrier picture than their Prussian allies. Although under the command of a Prussian general, Kleist von Nollendorf, its mixture of troops came from various states including the Electorate of Hesse, Lippe, Waldeck, various Saxon duchies, Anhalt, Schwarzburg and Oldenburg. Most units of this rag-tag and patchily supplied force of mainly raw recruits were unfamiliar to each other when they were cobbled together into untrained provisional regiments.

The North German Federal Army Corps had an impressive paper strength of 35,000 men, but in practice it never mustered more than 18,500, and only some 13,000 in May 1815. Not all the states required to supply contingents actually did so in time for the outbreak of hostilities, and of those that did arrive only the Hessians brought cavalry and artillery. Moreover, the lack of firearms and ammunition that affected even some Prussian units hampered the North Germans to at least as great an extent; Kleist was constantly begging Blücher for supplies, while Blücher was hard-pressed to find what he needed for his Prussians. Kleist also lacked a stable general staff, his officers often being transferred to other duties. The military commands of the contingents refused to fund a staff to run the

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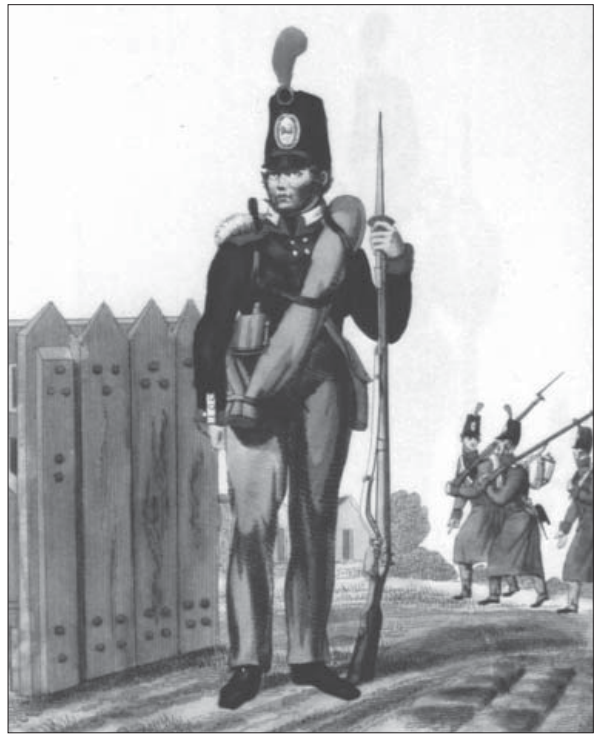
corps, while Prussian funds to do so were not available. This situation deteriorated further when Kleist for a time fell ill with jaundice.

On 5 May 1815, while Kleist was in the process of trying to turn this unpromising material into a force of military value, he was ordered to march them towards the French frontier. He had not yet had the opportunity to set up functioning lines of communication; he had no military postal system, and was being required to march through an area of Germany where no supplies had been stockpiled. The difficulties of this premature march exacerbated all the existing problems. Kleist suffered a relapse, but could not allow himself the luxury of taking to his bed, and the North Germans arrived on the Meuse river frontier on the fateful date of 18 June. The strain now proved too much for Kleist; he collapsed, and was obliged to hand over command to the Hessian LtGen von Engelhardt. The North Germans were finally about to go to war; however, given their poor quality, they would not be risked in open battle, but would rather be deployed against the fortresses in northern France during the subsequent advance to Paris.



This Genty plate is captioned *'Bataillons Nationaux'*, but the Prussian soldier is hard to identify. He wears a British-made shako with a red plume and white-metal plate. A white shirt collar is folded down outside that of the 1808 Prussian coatee, which has madder-red facings identifying one of the new Rhineland units. The trousers are grey, worn over dark gaiters, and the leather equipment is black. The men in the background wear British-supplied grey overcoats.

UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT

For a general outline of the regulation uniforms of the Prussian Army at this time, readers are referred to the various Men-at-Arms books written by this author (see inside back cover): MAA 149 & 152, respectively *Prussian Light* and *Prussian Line Infantry 1792–1815*; MAA 172, *Prussian Cavalry of the Napoleonic Wars (2) 1807–15*; MAA 192, *Prussian Reserve, Militia & Irregular Troops 1806–15*; and MAA 381, *Prussian Staff & Specialist Troops 1791–1815*.

Rather than repeating that material here, we have preferred to use the space to outline some of the many variations from the norm, taken from regimental histories and contemporaneous sources. Such records are far from complete, so the list of units that follows is not comprehensive, though the regimental histories of the line infantry provide the most information. The records of the Landwehr militia units are so sparse that most of what is known about the uniforms and equipment issued to them comes from the few contemporary drawings and paintings. As the cavalry regimental histories make little mention of any variations, presumably the line cavalry were clothed and equipped as close to regulation standard as possible. Records of what artillerymen may have worn are few indeed; as there was a shortage of trained gunners, men from various infantry regiments were transferred to the artillery late in the day, and do not appear to have been issued with new uniforms.

For ease of reference, the regimental notes below are given in the same order as in the orders-of-battle of the Army of the Lower Rhine and the North German Federal Army Corps (see pages 41 and 42).

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I ARMY CORPS

Ammunition was in such short supply that on 5 May LtGen von Zieten ordered that new recruits should be allowed to fire a maximum of eight live rounds as part of their training, although volunteers (who were armed with rifled weapons, and required to be able to hit their mark) were allowed 20 practice rounds. The artillery was so short of manpower that infantrymen were called upon to volunteer to serve the cannon. As late as 15 June, 20 men from the 30th Inf Regt transferred to the artillery when it was already marching off to battle and could hear the sound of gunfire.

Another of Genty's plates made during the occupation following the Hundred Days' campaign, by which time Prussian troops were receiving items from French military stores; these shortswords in black scabbards are French *sabre-briquets,* and the cartridge pouches may be French. The soldiers are not in fact 'grenadiers' as captioned, but musketeers of the 12th Inf Regt – presumably, 1815 recruits, who were provided by the Brandenburg depot with almost complete 1814 uniforms with red facings and shoulder straps. The man on the left wears the Russian-style gaiter trousers introduced in March 1815, but rarely seen until after Waterloo; his comrade has the older pattern trousers worn over separate black cloth gaiters.

1st Brigade:

12th Infantry Regiment

The regimental history states that due to shortages it was not possible to clothe and equip the men uniformly; there were considerable variations in the quality, colour and cut of the clothing and in the equipment carried.

This regiment originated in three reserve battalions raised in spring 1813: 1st & 2nd Reserve Bns/Life *(Leib)* Inf Regt, and 3rd Bn/1st W. Prussian Inf Regiment. It thus started its life with a mixture of uniforms, a situation that only deteriorated during the campaigns of 1813–15 when clothing and equipment were used up at a faster rate than they could be replaced. Supplies captured in France in February 1814 helped alleviate this situation, and French coatees were pressed into service. Nevertheless, eyewitnesses described men of this regiment as either bare-footed or wearing worn-out shoes, in trousers consisting of a collection of patches sewn together, and some of them without firearms. Most replacements arriving from the Brandenburg depots early in 1815 were fully clothed except for under-jackets. However, those coming from the Rhineland received British-made clothing that had been altered to the Prussian cut.

Muskets included the 1782 Prussian pattern, captured French Charlevilles, and weapons supplied by the Austrians and British; shortages were made up from the Luxembourg armoury. On mobilization in March 1815 it had been intended to exchange the firearms within the army corps and brigades so that no more than one type was carried by each regiment, but there was insufficient time to achieve this. The regiment thus went to war carrying a mixture of firearms, making the resupply of ammunition of various calibres very difficult. This picture – of a regiment wearing a mixture of old, patched clothing from two different Prussian regiments, French and re-cut British uniforms, and carrying a number of different weapons – was in fact typical for the period.

24th Infantry Regiment

Formed at the beginning of 1813 as the 12th Reserve Inf Regt, from 4th & 5th Reserve Bns/Life Regt, and 3rd Reserve Bn/3rd E. Prussian Inf Regiment. It, too, started life with a mixture of uniforms and equipment.

On mobilization in March 1815 it carried three types of firearms: the Prussian 1782 along with Austrian and British muskets. The Prussian muskets had a conical touch-hole which allowed the pan to be charged automatically as the cartridge was rammed down the barrel. The firearms of most other nations had a cylindrical touch-hole, so the pan had to be primed externally in a separate movement. Efforts were made to re-bore the foreign firearms to the Prussian system; while this process was in hand, the regiment received 300 French Charleville muskets, complicating the situation further.

In April new recruits arrived; those from Brandenburg were fully clothed except for under-jackets, while those from the Rhineland arrived without uniforms and were given altered British-made clothing. At first, four British-made uniforms were issued for every three Prussian. At the same time white Russian-style overall trousers were introduced, with buttoning 'spatterdash' feet. Neither the officers nor the other ranks were issued with sword-knots, so that the available 'lace' could be used to embellish the shakos.

On 26 April the regiment was absorbed into the line as the 24th Infantry, ranking as the 4th Brandenburg. All the regimental wagons and equipment now had to be repainted with the new designation, and the regimental tailors had to provide light blue shoulder straps for the entire regiment, though fortunately the

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LEFT: **This plate shows the 6th (1st W. Prussian) Inf Regt in the 1808-pattern uniforms, with red facings and white shoulder straps. It is not known if new uniforms were ever issued before Waterloo. The regimental history notes that local supplies of food started to run out in the spring of 1815, that no supplies were sent up from the magazines, and thus that food was in short supply even before the outbreak of hostilities. A number of the volunteers from Berlin who were allocated to the 1st Bn in late March were opera singers, so at least the battalion, while hungry, had an excellent choir.**

RIGHT: **The 7th (2nd W. Prussian) Inf Regt was one of those that went to war in 1815 with old, worn uniforms of the 1808 pattern.**

poppy-red collars were retained. It is not known if the alterations were completed before 15 June. (See commentary Plate B.)

When the brigade commander inspected the regiment on 7 June he noted that the firearms, brasses and cartridge boxes had not been cleaned properly. The men's white linen trousers were ill-fitting and were not buttoned up. Their knapsacks had been stuffed full of unnecessary items; their shakos hung down over their necks; and their hair 'covered their faces'. The officers had carelessly dumped their knapsacks in a wagon and the men in the wagon trod on them, damaging the straps. Of all the companies in the regiment, the 1st was in the worst state. Its men were not willing to reply to greetings of 'Good morning', and knew nothing about the role of skirmishers or how to conduct guard duties. The 1st Bn were unable to form up in a straight line; the 2nd Bn were unable to wheel properly when in column of attack, and the officers forgot to salute when required. Only a few weeks later this regiment would be in the thick of battle.

2nd Brigade:

6th (1st West Prussian) Infantry Regiment

On mobilization, men on furlough and those recovered from illness returned to the regiment, which also received reinforcements from the Rhineland. The Rhinelanders had formerly served in Berg or French regiments, were well trained, and soon picked up the Prussian drill. At the end of March volunteers from Berlin were allocated to the 1st Bn; the other battalions were joined by volunteers from Westphalia, who were considered to be especially good.

28th Infantry Regiment

One of the Rhineland territories that Prussia was awarded was the former Grand Duchy of Berg, whose troops had previously fought for Napoleon. The 1st Berg Regt was absorbed into the Prussian Army as the 28th Inf Regt, its new Prussian uniforms having pink facings and yellow shoulder straps (since it now ranked as the 3rd Westphalian). At the outbreak of hostilities the new uniforms had not yet been issued, so only the officers wore these distinctions during the Waterloo campaign; the men went to war in old white Berg uniforms, having removed the 'N' badge from their cartridge boxes. The white coatees led the regiment to be mistaken for French soldiers, so they were forced to wear their grey greatcoats for the duration of the fighting in the Netherlands.

2nd Westphalian Landwehr Infantry Regiment

The 3rd Bn was supplied with British muskets in May 1815.

3rd Brigade:

7th (2nd West Prussian) Infantry Regiment

This regiment was given all the white crossbelts previously worn by the 19th Inf Regt (see below).

29th Infantry Regiment

Formerly the 2nd Berg Regt, this was absorbed into the

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Prussian Army as the 29th Infantry in March 1815. In May the Berg Grenadier Bn joined the 2nd Regt, taking its strength up to three battalions; the grenadiers were now designated the 1st Bn, the former 1st Bn becoming the new 3rd Battalion.

The new regulation blue coatees with pink facings and light blue shoulder straps were not supplied in time, so (like the 28th Infantry) the new 29th went to war wearing their old white Berg coatees. Supplies of new trousers were available on mobilization in March 1815, with the grenadiers getting blue trousers and the others grey; these were worn over the gaiters, though a number of men continued to wear their old white trousers.

Unlike many other infantry regiments of the Army of the Lower Rhine, both the 28th and 29th were well equipped and supplied. In May 1815, while in Fleurus, the 2nd Bn/29th was supplied with new French muskets, handing its British weapons to 3rd Bn/2nd Westphalian Landwehr Regt; the 29th Inf was thus equipped entirely with Charlevilles. A substantial number of men in the regiment were veterans of earlier campaigns, who formed a solid cadre for the new recruits. Both the former Berg regiments proved to be reliable troops.

A later historical celebration of the 19th Inf Regt, showing at left its uniform for 1813 (when it was the 7th Reserve Inf Regt) as being a plain grey jacket and trousers. These began to be replaced with new regulation uniforms in summer 1814, but some Reserve clothing may well have still been in use in 1815.

4th Brigade:

19th (4th West Prussian) Infantry Regiment

Formed from the former 7th Reserve Inf Regt which had been mobilized for the autumn 1813 campaign. It had consisted of 1st & 3rd Bns/2nd W. Prussian Inf Regt along with its Reserve Bn, and began life with a mix of uniforms and equipment in varying but usually poor condition, which became further worn out during the 1813–14 campaigns.

As the 7th Reserve Inf Regt, these men received their first delivery of uniforms and equipment in July 1813. A contemporary report shows the 1st Bn to have carried three patterns of musket: the Prussian 1782 and 'New Prussian' patterns, and Austrian weapons. The 2nd Bn were armed with the 1782 pattern; they carried old-style sidearms on a white crossbelt where these were available, but had black belts for their cartridge boxes. The 3rd Bn carried both 1782 pattern and 'New Prussian' muskets. The NCOs of all three battalions were armed with carbines. As calfskin knapsacks were in short supply, all battalions received packs made of canvas.

After the ravages of the autumn 1813 campaign some new supplies arrived that winter, including white greatcoats which were given to the 3rd Battalion. The regiment marched into France in 1814 with barely adequate clothing and equipment. After the First Abdication in April 1814 the regiment passed all its white crossbelts over to the 2nd W. Prussian Inf Regt, receiving black replacements, and the shortage of firearms was alleviated by supplies of British muskets.

On 20 June 1814 all the regiment's officers finally received the new epaulettes required by an order-in-cabinet of 28 December 1813. The officers were also ordered to wear a new style of overalls, which had only 12 buttons down each side instead of the larger numbers worn previously. New blue coatees, with carmine-red facings and poppy-red shoulder straps, started to be issued to replace the old grey jackets the regiment had been wearing. The coatee collars were lower than the previous style and were now closed square at the throat, and NCOs' lace was now sewn around the upper and front edges instead of the front and lower edges as previously.

On 25 March 1815 the regiment was absorbed into the line as the 19th Infantry, and its facing colour was changed to pink; the poppy-red shoulder straps were retained, but no regimental number was sewn to them. The 3rd Bn was designated as the Fusilier Bn, exchanging its white greatcoats for grey and its white crossbelts for black. The 1st Bn was joined by 45 volunteers led by a first lieutenant, and 150 recruits from the Rhineland were sent to each battalion, arriving on 11 June; some had served under French command for as long as six years. They were clothed and armed from existing stocks of the new uniforms and firearms. Shortly after this, more reinforcements arrived from Silesia. This regiment appears to have been relatively well clothed, equipped and trained.

I Corps Reserve Cavalry – 1st Brigade:

5th Dragoon Regiment

All the buglers of this regiment rode dun horses with white manes.

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2nd Brigade:

6th Uhlan Regiment

Formed from former members of the cavalry of Lützow's Freikorps, a body of irregulars dating from the 1813 campaign, who wore a number of different uniforms. In March 1815 a reorganization of Lützow's cavalry began: the 1st Sqn was allocated to the newly-formed 9th Hussar Regt, while the 2nd, 3rd & 4th Sqns were used to form the new 6th Uhlans, keeping their squadron numbers. Since it lacked a depot squadron to supply replacements, members of the 1st & 2nd Hussar Regts of the former Russo-German Legion were used to bring the 6th Uhlans up to four-squadron strength.

The three old squadrons, and the replacements, were divided into four groups according to the men's length of service and the quality of their horses, and each group drew lots to determine which new squadron they were to join. The uniforms they wore were as mixed as their origins, and while it was intended to introduce a new uniform for the entire regiment this was not possible during the mobilization in March 1815. The 'Lützowers' continued to wear their old black dolmans with black cords; their shabraques were also black, and they were armed with lances, sabres and pistols. Officers who had been transferred from other regiments retained their old uniforms on a provisional basis, so alongside the new uhlan uniform officers could also be seen wearing their old brown, green, red, blue and black hussar uniforms.

II ARMY CORPS

5th Brigade:

25th (1st Rhineland) Infantry Regiment

This provides a striking example of a regiment that faced battle with a particularly incoherent composition and appearance.

It was formed from the former infantry of Lützow's Freikorps, the relevant order-in-cabinet being issued on 31 March 1815. The Freikorps had less than half the necessary manpower, so reorganization was necessary to transform it into a line regiment. The 3rd Bn of the Freikorps was designated the new Fusilier Battalion. Previously the companies had been numbered 1 to 4 within each battalion, but they were now renumbered 1 to 12 within the regiment. The men of the Freikorps had been referred to as 'Jäger' and the NCOs as 'Oberjäger'; the terms 'Musketier' and 'Fusilier' were now used instead, with 'Unteroffizier' for the NCOs. Non-Prussian nationals and a number of volunteers left the ranks, leaving the regiment only 900 strong on 16 May 1815.

Replacements were provided from 3rd & 10th Replacement Bns, from the district of Halberstadt and areas formerly part of the Kingdom of Westphalia. These were mostly young, poorly-trained men who continued to wear the uniforms of the replacement battalions, which contrasted with the black coats worn by the former Freikorps soldiers. There was clearly insufficient time to manufacture and issue the new regulation uniforms of this regiment. About 150–160 of the new replacements were allocated to each existing company. At this date, just a month before the first battle of the campaign, these men had never trained together, so by any measure the 25th Inf Regt was unready for combat.

As well as a lack of uniformity in its clothing, this regiment carried a mixture of equipment. The headgear consisted partly of cloth caps and partly of various shakos, including a number supplied by Britain; on 20 May the headgear was exchanged within the regiment, so that there was uniformity at least in each company. Men of the first and third ranks carried British-supplied knapsacks. All sorts of crossbelts and packs were carried, while the cartridge boxes were only big enough to accommodate 20 or 30 rounds.

A Genty plate showing the 3rd (Brandenburg) Uhlan Regt, with red facings and yellow shoulder straps. What may be a French shako is dressed with a Prussian oval pompon above a large circular cockade, and yellow cords. The shabraque and valise are blue with red edging, and the lance pennon is white over black. This regiment of the I Corps Reserve may have worn largely regulation uniform during the Waterloo campaign.

The 1st Bn was armed with British muskets, the 2nd with mixed British and French, and the Fusilier Bn entirely with French; the available ammunition supplies had to be reworked to fit the different calibres. The 1st Bn had 407 muskets available; the 2nd Bn, 415; and the Fusiliers, 425, a total shortfall of 728 muskets. Only around 100 musket slings were available for the entire regiment. A report of 22 April noted that the three battalions had, respectively, 56, 58 and 60 carbines available and in good condition for issue to NCOs. There were virtually no sidearms; the 1st Bn had none, the 2nd just 15 shortswords, and the Fusiliers ten. There was a noticeable lack of crossbelts; only 1,192 of the required 2,413 were available, of which only 795 white sets were issuable, while 278 black sets and 119 white sets were judged unusable.

During June 1815, damaged firearms were repaired and further British muskets were received. On 15 June, the day before the regiment went into battle, it had 180 carbines and 2,529 muskets, including 1,328 British and 1,201 French.

The time between the regiment's arrival in Dinant on 23 May and 16 June was employed in training the men in the basics of battle drill. On 13 June, just three days before its first engagement,

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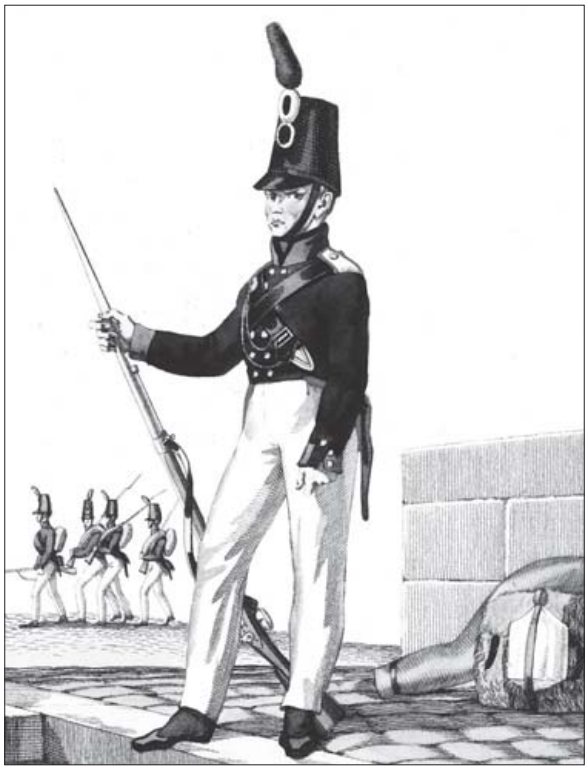

A Genty plate of a smartly turned-out Landwehr militiaman. He is shown wearing a British-made shako, and an 1808-pattern line coatee perhaps made up from British-supplied cloth. The shako tuft and coatee facings are a light green, suggesting the Westphalian militia (green dye was notorious for fading quickly); the shoulder straps are shown as white outlined with red piping. His black crossbelt equipment seems to be complete with a bayonet scabbard, and a brass picker-and-brush set; on the ground are his calfskin knapsack with covered canteen, and his grey greatcoat roll.

330 more replacements arrived from the depot in Cleve (of the men originally sent off, 117 had deserted en route). These were in part former French soldiers, so they were divided up between all 12 companies. These men wore old uniforms from the 2nd (1st Pomeranian) Inf Regt, which had been altered to include the madder-red facings of the new but in fact not yet supplied uniform of the 25th Infantry.

Feldjäger Company

The 25th Inf also included a company of volunteers consisting of 6 Oberjäger and 135 Jäger, who for tactical purposes were divided equally between the three battalions. These men had armed and equipped themselves at their own expense, with 80 excellent rifles, 40 good muskets, 85 sword bayonets, 60 powder horns, 107 backpacks, and sufficient ammunition.

11th Hussar Regiment, 1st & 2nd Squadrons

Formed from the Berg Lancers, which had seen extensive service under Napoleon in the Peninsula, Russia and Germany. Once Napoleon had been expelled from Germany at the end of 1813, the Lancers' depot was used as a cadre around which a new regiment was to be formed, and its numbers grew as prisoners-of-war returned home. As a large supply of the green cloth used to make the Lancers' uniforms was still available, it was decided that this new hussar regiment was to be clothed in green. By February 1814 it was at full strength. During the months of training following Napoleon's first abdication in April the regimental diaries contain many complaints about the quality of the recruits, poor officers, and unsuitable horses. It is interesting that after being absorbed into the Prussian Army this regiment continued for a while to train according to the French drill regulations.

6th Brigade:

9th (Colberg) Infantry Regiment

After the First Abdication this regiment was supplied with new uniforms, and it would seem to be one of the few that fought in 1815 in regulation dress. It also exchanged some of its muskets with other regiments, so that it carried only British weapons. As the 'Brown Bess' did not have the conical touch-hole normal in Prussian-manufactured firearms, the men had to be trained in a different firing drill to incorporate a separate pan-priming movement. This regiment was clearly fit for combat.

26th Infantry Regiment

Formed from the Elbe Inf Regt, itself formed from various battalions raised during the course of the 1813 campaigns from inhabitants of former Prussian territories lost in 1807. The 1st Bn was raised in spring 1813 from volunteers and deserters from the Westphalian army; commanded by LtCol von Reuss, it was at full strength by May 1813. Reuss purchased 120 muskets out of his own pocket, while the Austrians supplied 300 more; others arrived from different sources, including both French and British weapons. New uniforms were also supplied, of British manufacture.

During summer 1813 a 2nd Bn was raised partly from Hessian and Westphalian guardsmen. Its uniforms were again of British origin, with white lace on the chest, though they had been altered to appear more Prussian. The British also supplied the 2nd Bn with muskets, while its NCOs carried carbines. Many of the other necessary items, such as knapsacks and messtins, were in short supply. Once the 2nd Bn was more or less ready for service a 3rd or Fusilier Bn was formed, around a cadre of prisoners-of-war from the states of the Confederation of the Rhine. Uniforms were again British in origin, in this case green coatees as used by the Rifle battalions, with black facings and white-metal buttons, and British-made crossbelts, so this battalion did not look remotely Prussian. A depot battalion was then established in Stargard to provide replacements to the regiment. It was supplied with blue coatees with green collars, cuffs and shoulder straps; neither knapsacks nor musical instruments were available.

The regiment was reorganized and resupplied after the First Abdication. Most of the green uniforms worn by the Fusilier Bn were replaced with blue reworked British-made uniforms; NCOs had lace sewn along the upper edge of their collars, and were supplied with leather gloves, while during the summer of 1814 a second pair of linen trousers were produced from British-supplied cloth. Supplies were also taken from captured fortresses. Greatcoats were manufactured locally during the autumn, while each battalion received 170 new sets of kit which were issued to the NCOs and men of the front rank. Furthermore, sufficient supplies of blue cloth allowed all the men to have woollen overalls made for wear during the coming winter.

However, not all the shortages could be made good in time for the mobilization in 1815. Attempts to supply new coatees were hindered by the poor quality of their manufacture. After having disposed of the Austrian muskets, the regiment still carried four

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Interesting presentation of the uniforms of the 21st Inf Regt; the former 9th Reserve Regt was in the throes of transformation into a line unit in 1813–14, and received some British-made items. Here the 1st Bn man (left) wears a simple blue coatee with green facings and shoulder straps, the 2nd Bn man (second left) the same with red distinctions; both have oddly-depicted British shakos (which eyewitnesses sometimes likened to the shape of a contemporary sugarloaf, but which are clearly too tall here). The 3rd Bn fusilier (centre) has a green coatee faced black, and an early Prussian shako; all have dark blue trousers, and the background figure has a caped British greatcoat. The 1815 figure (right) has the 1814-pattern shako, a coatee with white Pomeranian facings and red second-seniority shoulder straps, and grey trousers. Some of the Reserve uniforms seem to have been still in use in 1815.

different types: the Prussian 1782, the 'New Prussian', the British 'Brown Bess' and the French Charleville. About 30 men per company lacked knapsacks, but the regiment had no funds to procure them.

On 25 March 1815 the regiment was renamed the 26th Infantry, and soon received some 80–100 volunteers of good family. On mobilization, manpower was made up by re-enlisting former members of the Westphalian army, who were supplied with kit taken from the Invalids in the static garrisons. These reinforcements arrived on 2 June, only a fortnight before the regiment saw action.

11th Hussar Regiment, 3rd & 4th Squadrons

See under 5th Brigade, above.

7th Brigade:

14th Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 2nd Reserve Inf Regt, consisting in 1813 of 3rd Bn and 1st & 4th Reserve Bns/1st Pomeranian Regiment.

The 1st Bn was initially supplied with grey jackets with grey buttons, collars, cuffs and shoulder straps, along with grey trousers and field caps. They were later issued shakos made of cardboard with an oilskin cover, on the front of which a painted white ring simulated the Prussian cockade. They were also supplied with grey greatcoats, which did not have coloured facings. Officers and NCOs wore the regulation uniform of the 1st Pomeranian Regt: blue coatees with two rows of yellow-metal buttons and white collars and cuffs. The 2nd and Fusilier Bns appear to have been clothed and equipped in a similar fashion to the 1st Bn, and the firearms supplied were in good condition.

During the summer of 1813 supplies of blue coatees arrived from Britain. These had short tails with white trim, red collars, cuffs and shoulder straps, and broad white lace 'loops' on the single-breasted front. They also received a delivery of blue trousers, greatcoats with folding (caped) collars, and tapered shakos with a tin badge and a red-and-white woollen plume 9in tall. By 1815 efforts had been made to adapt these British items to the Prussian style. The white lace was removed from the coatees and a second row of buttons sewn on. Using cardboard, the shakos were converted into a bell-top shape and then covered with oilskin. In March 1815 the 2nd Reserve Inf Regt was renamed the 14th Infantry Regiment.

22nd Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 10th Reserve Inf Regt, which consisted of 3rd Bn and 1st & 2nd Reserve Bns/1st Silesian Inf Regiment. The cadre of officers and NCOs wore the regulation uniform of that regiment, with yellow facings.

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The 3rd Bn were supplied with black jackets since there was a shortage of blue cloth. The 1st & 2nd Reserve Bns were supplied with a mixture of blue and some grey jackets, which had two rows of yellow-metal buttons but neither coat-tails nor folding cuffs. A 4-in long yellow patch was sewn on the front of the collars, although red collars were also seen.

Supplies of regulation dark blue coatees with two rows of yellow-metal buttons arrived after the First Abdication. On 25 March 1815 it was stipulated that the facing colour should be madder-red, though it is very unlikely this change was made before the Waterloo campaign. Most of the field caps were light grey, although men of the 1st Reserve Bn also wore blue. The crossbelts of the 3rd (later Fusilier) Bn were largely black, and those of the musketeer battalions white.

8th Brigade:

21st Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 9th Reserve Inf Regt, which consisted of 1st, 2nd & 4th Reserve Bns/Colberg Regiment. The old uniforms of the Reserve battalions were partly replaced in summer 1814, but nowhere near enough supplies were available. That October a number of blue cloth trousers were delivered to the regiment, along with 132 greatcoats. (See print on page 15.)

The new 28th and 29th Inf Regts were raised around a hard core of former soldiers of the Berg infantry, and this contemporary plate by Genty shows that old white Berg uniforms continued to be worn during the occupation following the Hundred Days' campaign.

23rd Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 11th Reserve Inf Regt, which consisted of 3rd Bn and 1st & 2nd Reserve Bns/2nd Silesian Inf Regiment.

The 3rd Bn was equipped in a similar way to the 1st Musketeer Bn of 2nd Silesian Infantry, although with waist-length jackets instead of coatees. The jackets did, however, have two rows of yellow-metal buttons, yellow collars and cuffs, and red shoulder straps. The existing stocks of grey cloth were used to make up trousers, greatcoats, field caps and gloves, but when the grey cloth ran out black was used instead. The headgear was a shako, and officers wore the regulation uniform. There were sufficient crossbelts, cartridge boxes, messtins and knapsacks available to supply the entire battalion. The two Reserve battalions were supplied with grey jackets, trousers, greatcoats and gloves, blue field caps, and short black boots. Again, there was insufficient grey cloth, so black was also used.

By the end of the 1814 campaign the regiment was virtually in rags; that autumn, attempts were made to alleviate this situation and to bring the regiment up to strength. When it was absorbed into the line in March 1815 as the 23rd Inf Regt, its 3rd Bn was designated as the Fusilier Battalion. New uniforms could not be made available before the outbreak of hostilities.

III ARMY CORPS

9th Brigade:

30th Infantry Regiment

This started life as part of the Russo-German Legion of the Russian Army, raised from largely German prisoners-of-war taken in Russia in 1812. After the First Abdication the Russians no longer needed the Legion, so a new home was sought for it. Renamed the 'German Legion', it was first allocated to the armies of Berg and Saxony; but as the Grand Duchy of Berg and part of Saxony were going to become Prussian territory the infantry of the Legion were re-designated as two Prussian regiments, the 30th and 31st. Since only 20–25 per cent of the original manpower remained, men from depot battalions were used to bring these up to strength. The new replacements came from all over Prussia, from Magdeburg, Halberstadt, and to a lesser extent from Westphalia, Silesia, East Prussia and Brandenburg.

Bolts of cloth for making uniforms arrived from Britain in October 1814 and manufacture commenced immediately, even though there was sufficient old kit available for the existing manpower. The regiment was supposed to receive blue uniforms of Prussian cut with madder-red collars and cuffs and light blue shoulder straps. All rankers would be supplied with one new coatee, one pair of linen trousers, grey gaiters, one shako-cover and one leather neckstock, plus a bread-bag. Additionally, each soldier was provided with two pairs of shoes (each company carrying 30 pairs in reserve), two shirts and two pairs of socks.

On mobilization in March 1815 wool trousers and gloves were not issued, and neither were greatcoats or field caps, since although the regiment had been supplied with the cloth there had been no time to make them up. No new crossbelts were issued, and only the NCOs had sword-knots. For the sake of uniformity all the men were issued with Russian *kiwer* shakos; all the other types of headgear being worn were collected up and sent to the depot in Düsseldorf, as were all messtins and cooking pots, which were replaced with new issue.

The whole regiment was fortunate enough to be supplied with British muskets, and it handed in all stocks of other patterns. As

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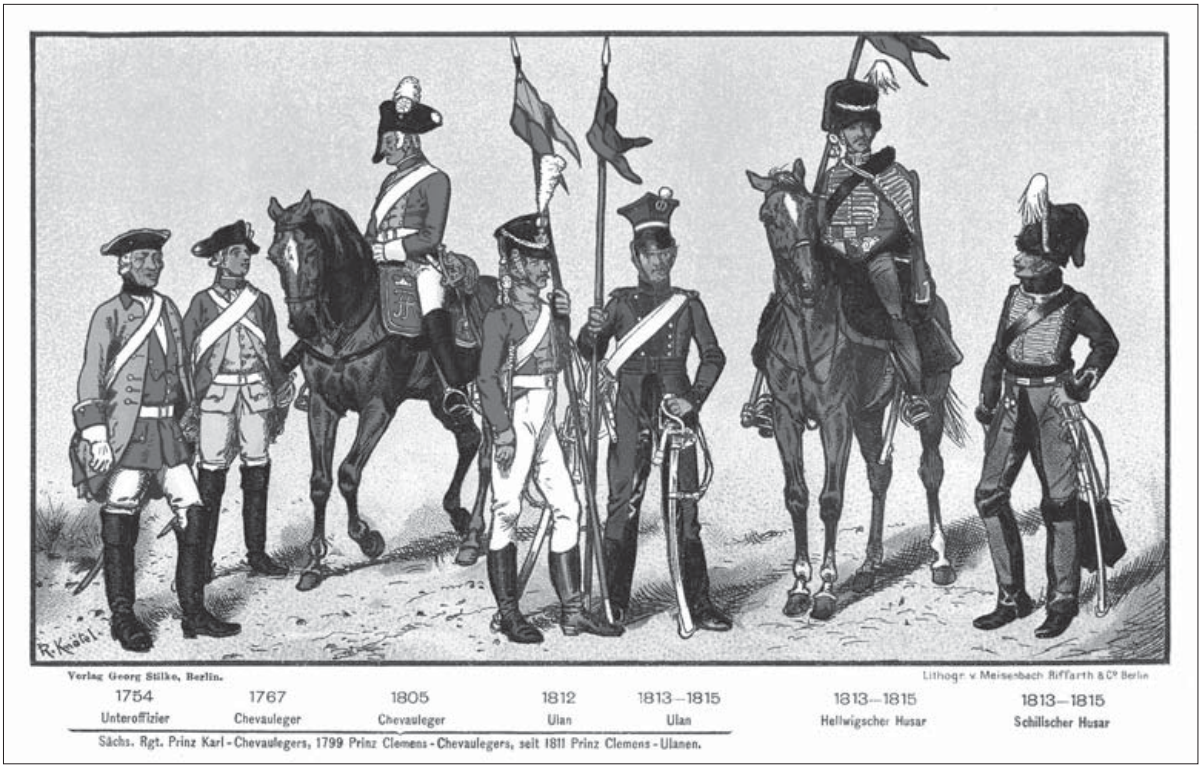

Presentation of the uniforms of the 7th Uhlans showing the regiment's antecedents, including red-coated Saxon horse regiments (left), uhlans in red and blue (centre), and Prussian free corps hussars in red and blue (right).

well as sorting out its equipment the regiment engaged in solid training for battle; well equipped and drilled, it was fit for purpose.

10th Brigade:

27th Infantry Regiment

Formed only in March 1815, partly from two battalions of irregulars raised for the 1813 German campaigns: Reiche's Foreign Jäger Bn, and the infantry of Hellwig's Freikorps. During April it was brought up to strength by the inclusion of the Reserve Bn/Elbe Inf Regt and the 7th Replacement Battalion.

Reiche's Jäger were issued with green coatees with two rows of yellow-metal buttons, red collars and cuffs, and green shoulder straps piped red. They wore grey trousers with tall black boots, black crossbelts, and a black felt shako with yellow-metal chinscales. As there were insufficient coatees to go around a number of men were given white British-made jackets instead. Hellwig's infantrymen lacked both uniforms and arms. They were supplied with a number of dark green coatees with white-metal buttons, pointed black cuffs piped white, and black collars, shoulder straps and wings; shakos with a black-and-white cockade above a white-metal hunting horn, and chinscales; grey trousers with tall black boots, and black crossbelts. They were issued captured French muskets as and when these became available.

When the 27th Inf Regt was formed, Reiche's men provided the staff of the Fusilier Bn as well as its 9th & 10th Companies. The remainder of his men and those of Hellwig were used to form the 1st & 2nd Battalions. The Elbe Reserve Bn, which consisted of 15 officers and around 300 men, arrived in the second half of April 1815 and was allocated to the 2nd Bn; the 7th Replacement Bn was used to plug the gaps in the very under-strength 1st Battalion. This left the regiment with three battalions of differing quality: the 1st Bn were largely young, inexperienced recruits led by a cadre of veterans; the 2nd Bn consisted largely of veterans of the 1812 campaign and the siege of Danzig; and the Fusiliers, largely volunteers, were regarded as an élite unit. Given their various origins, training in battle drills had to start from scratch, and they had only a matter of weeks to prepare for action.

There was neither the time nor the resources to manufacture and issue new regulation uniforms for the regiment, so it fought in the old clothing it had available. There were insufficient funds to provide the officers with shakos, so many marched off wearing caps. The 9th & 10th fusilier companies with the green jackets added light blue Elbe provincial collars in so far as material was available. The fusiliers who had been supplied with British greatcoats removed the caped collars and used the material for other purposes. The first two battalions used blue coatees of both British and Prussian manufacture. A small number of new knapsacks and sets of crossbelts were issued. The men carried firearms of British, Dutch and 1782 Prussian patterns, but sufficient ammunition arrived only days before the fighting began. This regiment thus went to war hardly fit for active service.

12th Brigade:

31st Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 2nd Inf Regt of the former Russo-German Legion (see above, 30th Inf Regt), which consisted of its 3rd, 4th

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& 6th Battalions. After seeing action in the Netherlands in 1814, and leaving Russian service for Prussian as the German Legion, the regiment was absorbed into the Prussian Army on 29 March 1815. By spring 1814 the Russian uniforms had already become badly war-worn. As the British government had agreed to fund the Legion new uniforms were expected from Britain, along with horse furniture and crossbelts. These men were armed entirely with British muskets, but did not have any sidearms. This regiment appears to have been generally ready for battle; it may not have been entirely clothed in good uniforms, but it was uniformly armed, and consisted of adequately trained and experienced men.

III Corps Reserve Cavalry – 1st Brigade:

7th Uhlan Regiment

Raised in 1815 from former members of the Saxon Cheveaux-legers Regt 'Prinz Clemens' plus two squadrons of Hellwig's irregular cavalry, but hostilities broke out before it could be properly formed. When Hellwig was given command of the 9th Hussars on 24 April 1815, most of his officers went with him, leaving the 7th Uhlans without adequate leadership; and since its dispersed squadrons were deployed to patrol the border with France they never trained together. Lacking both familiar officers and combined training, the regiment was thus unfit for battlefield employment.

8th Uhlan Regiment

Formed from four hussar squadrons of the former Russo-German Legion; and although designated as a lancer unit on 20 April 1815, it continued to wear hussar uniforms for some years thereafter. The 1st & 2nd Sqns wore green dolmans with yellow cords and red collars, while the 3rd & 4th Sqns wore black dolmans with black cords and light blue collars. Despite their title they were not armed with lances. An inventory of 29 April shows that the 1st & 2nd Sqns had adequate numbers of French pistols, while the other squadrons had hardly any; the regiment was required to hand in any Russian pistols it had, as these were of poor quality. A mixture of Russian and British sabres were carried. During summer 1814 the cavalry of the Legion had been remounted on good horses from Mecklenburg. Despite the partial lack of firearms this regiment was adequately equipped, well enough mounted and trained, and formed a cohesive unit.

In 1815, when it served with the reserve cavalry of IV Army Corps, the regulation colours of the 10th Hussar Regt were a dark green dolman and pelisse, light blue collar and cuffs, and yellow cord and lace. Few variations from regulations are noted in the regimental histories of line cavalry units.

2nd Brigade:

5th Uhlan Regiment

Formed on 25 April 1815 from one squadron each of the 2nd Silesian Uhlan Regt, 3rd Brandenburg Uhlan Regt, and Berg Hussar Regiment. The uhlan squadrons appear to have worn the regulation uniforms of their parent regiments. The Berg squadron went to war in their old hussar uniforms, and were not issued with lances; they wore leather shakos, and green dolmans and pelisses with white cords. The grey riding overalls had red piping along the outside seam. The shabraques were green with red and white vandyked edging. At first, the regiment was poorly mounted on farmers' horses.

7th Dragoon Regiment

Formed in March 1815 from the 2nd Sqn/1st W. Prussian Dragoon Regt, 3rd Sqn/Brandenburg Regt, and 2nd Sqn/Neumark Regiment. Its new uniform with white facings and yellow-metal buttons was not issued in time for the outbreak of hostilities.

9th Hussar Regiment

Formed on 29 March 1815 from the 3rd Sqn/4th (1st Silesian) Hussar Regt, 4th Sqn/5th Hussar Regt, and 3rd Sqn of Lützow's Freikorps cavalry. New regulation clothing could not be issued in time, so each squadron still wore its old uniform.

III Corps Reserve Artillery

Horse Batteries Nos. 18 & 19

These batteries had been part of the Russo-German Legion and were equipped with Russian guns, each having six 6-pdrs and two 'unicorns' (hybrid gun-howitzers). The men wore the green uniforms of the Legion.

IV ARMY CORPS

15th Brigade:

18th (1st Westphalian) Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 6th Reserve Inf Regt, comprising 1st & 2nd Reserve Bns/1st W. Prussian Inf Regt and 4th Reserve Bn/1st Silesian Inf Regiment. After the First Abdication the regiment was posted to the Rhineland, where young local recruits were enrolled, and considerable efforts were made to ensure that they were adequately trained. The regiment had started to modify its

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uniforms by replacing the old collars and cuffs with facings in the new pink provincial colour. However, by 15 June, when its marching orders arrived, the old collars and cuffs had only been removed but not replaced, so the regiment went to war without facings.

16th Brigade:

15th Infantry Regiment

Formed on 5 February 1813 as the 3rd Reserve Inf Regt, from the 3rd Bn/2nd E. Prussian Inf Regt, 3rd E. Prussian Reserve Bn, 2nd Lithuanian Fusilier Reserve Bn, and 4th E. Prussian Reserve Battalion. In August 1813 the 1st Bn (formerly 3rd/2nd E. Prussian Regt) was disbanded, and 3rd & 4th E. Prussian Reserve Bns were re-designated the 1st & 2nd Bns respectively.

The first uniforms supplied were the short grey jackets, caps and trousers common in the Reserve battalions. Canvas knapsacks were issued instead of the more expensive calfskin type. Grey greatcoats were also issued, along with black gaiters and black cartridge boxes on white belts. The officers wore the uniform of the 2nd E. Prussian Inf Regiment. The regiment was armed initially with various patterns of Prussian muskets. Only the NCOs had sidearms, and were also armed with French carbines. The quality of the firearms was regarded as poor. On 25 March 1815 the regiment was taken into the line as the 15th Inf Regiment. New uniforms were not issued in time for the June campaign.

IV Corps Reserve Cavalry – 2nd Brigade:

8th Hussar Regiment

Created on 7 March 1815 from one squadron each from the 2nd Life Hussars, Brandenburg Hussars, and 6th Hussars. The Brandenburg squadron only caught up with the other two at Liège on 15 June 1815, so had never trained with them. Around 100 volunteers also joined the regiment, forming a separate detachment. Most of the personnel were experienced men, and the individual squadrons were ready for battle.

NORTH GERMAN FEDERAL ARMY CORPS

1st (Hessian) Brigade:

Infantry Regiment 'Landgraf Karl'; Infantry Regiment 'Prinz Solms'

2nd (Hessian) Brigade:

Infantry Regiment 'Kurprinz'

In each of these three regiments the two infantry battalions were made up to strength with men from II Musketeer Battalion.

Artillery:

Hessian 6-pdr Batteries Nos. 1 & 2

Neither had received firing training.

3rd (Anhalt-Thuringian) Brigade:

This consisted largely of young, inexperienced troops who had never fired live ammunition, led by inadequate officers and NCOs. They trained according to French drill regulations. Two-thirds of the men were armed with French muskets, one-third with British, and state contingents often carried a mix of both patterns. The shoes and uniforms were of poor quality and badly worn, and there were insufficient greatcoats and messtins. Note below the often woeful state of ammunition supply.

1st Provisional Infantry Regiment:

Saxe-Weimar Line Infantry Battalion; Saxe-Weimar Landwehr Battalion

Both these units had sufficient ammunition.

Anhalt-Dessau Line Infantry Battalion

Had little or no ammunition, and often only one flint per man.

Anhalt-Bernburg-Köthen Jäger Battalion

Had little or no ammunition, and often only one flint per man. (It had been intended to supply this unit with rifles.)

2nd Provisional Infantry Regiment:

Saxe-Gotha Line Infantry Battalion; Saxe-Gotha Landwehr Battalion

Both units had little or no ammunition, and often only one flint per man.

Schwarzburg Line Infantry Battalion

It had little or no ammunition, and often only one flint per man. The Rudolstadt contingent had lost part of its supplies, and was short of nine coatees, 193 jackets, seven pairs of linen trousers, 289 pairs of shoes, 173 forage caps, etc. The 300-strong Sonderhausen contingent was short of 45 greatcoats, 36 coatees, 100 jackets, 40 pairs of cloth trousers, 300 pairs of linen trousers, 168 forage caps, 200 neckstocks, 182 messtins, 150 cockades, 74 musket slings, 300 messtin slings, etc.

3rd Provisional Infantry Regiment:

Lippe Line Infantry Battalion; Lippe-Detmold Landwehr Battalion; Waldeck Line Infantry Battalion

All three units had little or no ammunition, and often only one flint per man.

Oldenburg Line Infantry Regiment

This was fully trained and equipped, and had sufficient ammunition.

DRILL & TRAINING

The most effective way of deploying infantry armed with smoothbore, muzzle-loading muskets was in a line up to three men deep, bringing to bear the greatest firepower possible. However, this required a high level of training, which became harder to provide as the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars wore on. Consequently there was a tendency to move away from deployment and manoeuvre in lines and toward the use of columns of infantry covered by a line of skirmishers, the latter often being men specially selected for this purpose.

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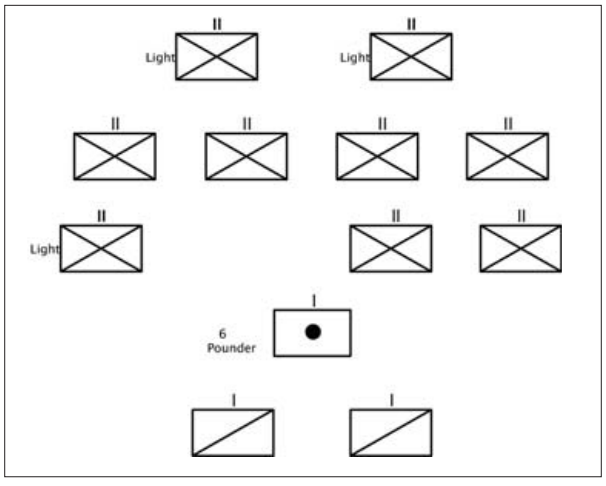

The 1812 Drill Regulations were amended in 1815 to take into account the increase from seven to nine infantry battalions in the brigades of mixed arms, and the reduction in brigade cavalry. The infantry of a Prussian brigade at this time were of equivalent strength to a division in most other armies.
(Drawing © John Cook)

Disastrously defeated in the 1806–07 campaign, and subjugated by France thereafter, the Prussian Army took this step after its size was restricted to 42,000 men under the terms of the 1808 Peace of Paris. Having lost so much territory, the kingdom now had very limited resources; this led to the introduction of the so-called 'Krümper system', by which rotations of men were partially trained and then sent on furlough, thus building up a reserve that could be mobilized in time of war. The Reserve battalions and regiments mentioned in the unit list above were the products of this policy.

Battle drills needed to be modified to suit the requirements of an army much of which would be receiving hasty refresher training upon mobilization, so from 1808 onwards various 'Instructions' were issued, which were eventually consolidated into the 1812 Drill Regulations. This relatively brief manual gave a simplified outline of battle drills; older regulations governing other aspects of military conduct, e.g. those of 1788, remained largely in force. The need for combined-arms training was also recognized. Though the restrictions of the Peace of Paris obliged Prussia to abandon the planned combined-arms field divisions, the reduced army was organized in combined-arms brigades.

In 1815 some of the infantry of the newly-acquired Rhineland provinces, as well as parts of the North German Federal Army Corps, were more familiar with the French regulations of 1792, which had been translated into German. There were minor variations between the French and Prussian battle drills at battalion level, determined in part by the different composition of an infantry battalion and in part by the different firing drills required by the muskets used. These differences had no marked effect on performance in battle, and, since the North Germans were deployed separately from the Prussian forces, neither did they have any detrimental effect on the outcome of the 1815 campaign.

The battle deployments specified by the 1812 Regulations are covered and illustrated in greater detail in the author's Osprey Elite 182, *Prussian Napoleonic Tactics 1792–1815*. Broadly, however, they stipulated four basic deployments for a brigade: with the infantry battalions in line; in attack formation; making a bayonet charge; and in defence against cavalry. The infantry battalions of a brigade were drawn up in three waves. The first was composed of the fusilier battalions (light infantry), deployed as skirmishers when necessary; these would withdraw to join the third wave when the brigade made a bayonet attack, and would form square when threatened by cavalry. The second wave consisted of three of the four battalions of musketeers in the brigade's two line infantry regiments. The third wave, or reserve, consisted of the senior musketeer battalion from among the two line regiments, and the grenadier battalion formed from the two grenadier companies of each of the two line regiments. Three cavalry regiments and one battery of artillery were to be deployed in support as required.

As the size of brigades began to vary once the War of Liberation broke out in 1813, modifications were made to this formation, although the

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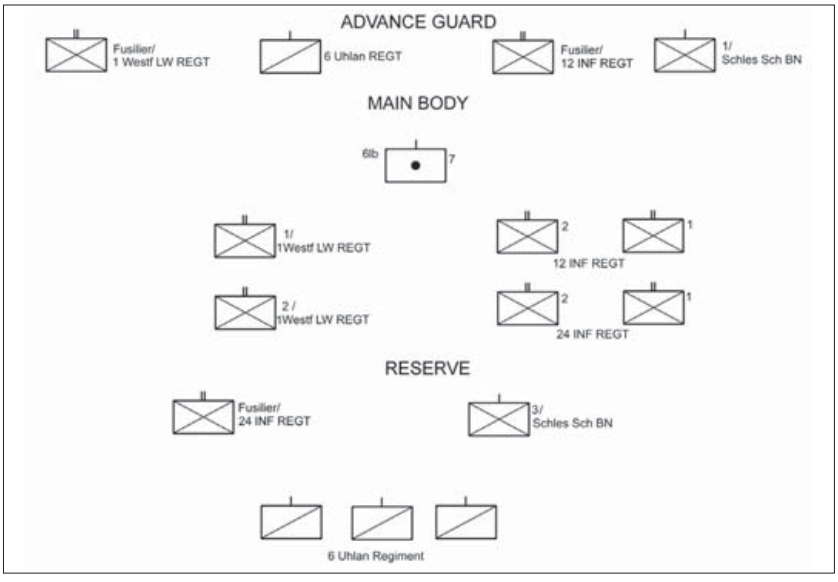

Tactical formation of 1st Bde, I Army Corps at Ligny.
The 'first wave' or advance guard consisted of (from left to right) Fusilier Bn/1st Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt; one squadron of 6th Uhlan Regt; Fusilier Bn/12th Inf Regt; and 1st Co/ Silesian Schützen Battalion.
The *'corps de bataille'* or main body consisted of Foot Battery No. 7 (to the fore), followed by the first line: 1st Bn/1st Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt, and the two musketeer battalions of 12th Inf Regiment. The second line consisted of 2nd Bn/1st Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt, and the two musketeer battalions of 24th Inf Regiment.
The reserve was provided by Fusilier Bn/24th Inf Regt, and 3rd Co/Silesian Schützen Bn, with three squadrons of 6th Uhlan Regt drawn up behind them.
(Drawing © Dallas Gavan)

basic principles remained: a firing line of skirmishers to the front, with two waves of infantry battalions drawn up in column in support.

1815

On 8 June 1815, MajGen von Grolman issued an *Instruction* to the brigade commanders outlining the deployment that was to be used in the forthcoming campaign. Most brigades now had three regiments of infantry rather than the two envisaged in the 1812 Regulations, giving them nine battalions instead of seven; however, the grenadier companies had been removed, and the brigade cavalry had been reduced from three regiments to just two squadrons.

The basic principles of the 1812 Regulations were retained: two fusilier battalions made up the advance guard of the brigade, four musketeer and/or Landwehr battalions formed the main battle line, while one fusilier and two musketeer/Landwehr battalions were held in reserve in the third line. The one artillery battery and two cavalry squadrons were to be deployed according to circumstances. The command structure at brigade level reflected this mixed-arm composition; each brigade normally had an overall commander, and one subordinate commander each for the infantry, cavalry and artillery. The huge reduction in the cavalry available to support the brigade was due in part to the shortage of trained battle cavalry in a rapidly expanded army, and in part to the formation of reserve cavalry brigades at army corps level.

Whenever an army corps required a vanguard an entire brigade was designated for this purpose, and was bolstered by the addition of (normally) two cavalry regiments and a horse battery from the reserve held at corps level. Occasionally, half a battery of 12-pdrs from the corps reserve artillery was added. In open terrain the two regiments from the reserve cavalry were required to follow the vanguard brigade closely, while in other circumstances they would be deployed as the corps commander judged best.

The Landwehr regiments were required to designate one battalion as fusiliers; where they had not already done so the brigade commander

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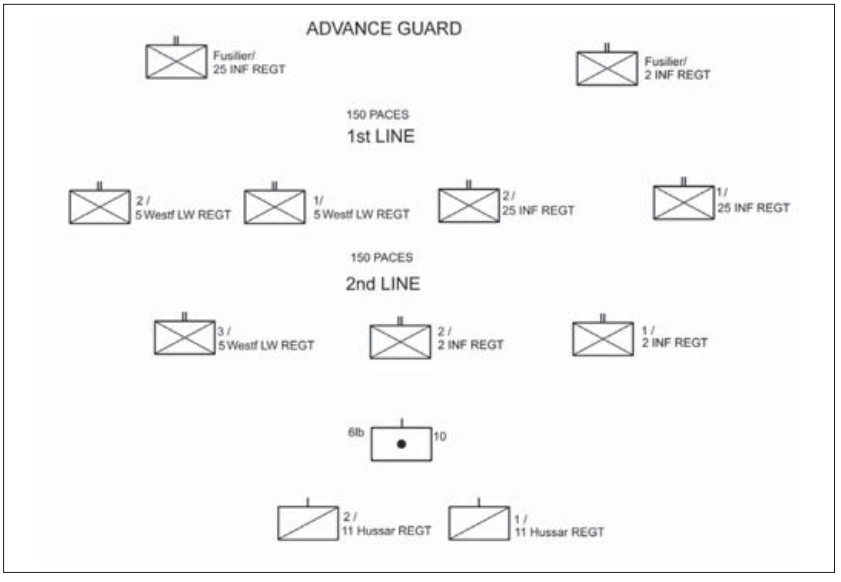

Tactical formation of 5th Bde, II Army Corps at Ligny. The advance guard was provided by the Fusilier Bns of the 25th and 2nd Inf Regts, 150 paces ahead of the main body. The first line of the main body consisted of (left to right): 2nd & 1st Bns/5th Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt; 2nd & 1st Bns/25th Inf Regiment. 150 paces behind these, the second line consisted of 3rd Bn/5th Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt; 2nd & 1st Bns/2nd (1st Pomeranian) Inf Regiment. Drawn up behind them were Foot Battery No. 10, then (left to right) 2nd & 1st Sqns/11th Hussar Regiment. (Drawing © Dallas Gavan)

would select the battalion he considered most suitable for the purpose. It was a requirement for all Landwehr battalions to be able to deploy their third ranks for employment as skirmishers, though it is unlikely that many of them possessed the ability to do so.

There were some examples of variations in the above deployments, dictated either by local circumstances or by variations in the brigade's composition. Those of the 1st and 5th Bdes at Ligny are illustrated on pages 21 and 22 as examples of these variations.

THE ARMY IN BATTLE

The following accounts of the performance of elements of the Army of the Lower Rhine in the Netherlands campaign of June 1815 are drawn largely from after-action reports contained in the various regimental histories, and similar sources.

THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES, 15 JUNE

Anglophone mythology has it that Napoleon's assault on the Prussian positions along the frontier of northern France took them by such surprise that they failed to keep the Duke of Wellington informed, but this is quite erroneous.

For weeks beforehand the Prussians had prepared their defences and conducted patrols into French territory, establishing the location of French concentrations and the likelihood of them commencing offensive operations. As France and the Kingdom of the Netherlands were not officially in a state of war – the Allies had declared war on Napoleon, not on France – the border between France and the Netherlands remained open to travellers of many kinds, and information was gathered from these sources. The French build-up was so closely observed that the Allied forces along the frontier were placed on alert from 9 June. Those forces included the outposts in the Prussian sector, where MajGen von Steinmetz deployed the men of his 1st Bde at various strategic points.

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These outposts, consisting of small bodies of infantry and cavalry, were normally placed where they would have a good view, with mounted messengers to relay reports of any movement by the French. These 'tripwire' outposts were to withdraw on supporting troops if attacked, and 'alarm cannon' would fire off a pre-arranged signal if this was judged to be a major offensive.

Once alerted, the troops were to concentrate at pre-arranged assembly points, whence they could move to places selected as being suitable for conducting delaying actions. The more time they bought, the more time the Allied armies had to concentrate and bring their superiority in numbers to bear. The designated assembly area for Steinmetz's corps was around Sombreffe, and it was close to this village that the first major battle of the campaign was fought, at Ligny on 16 June.

I Army Corps:

1st Brigade

The 1st Bde had been deployed in the area between the old Roman road and the Sambre river, with outposts placed from Bonne Espérance forward of Binche to Lobbes, where they linked up with those of the 2nd Brigade (see map on page 4).

During the night of 14/15 June the 24th Inf Regt received orders that in the event of a French attack it was to fall back along the right bank of the Sambre to the windmill on the hill at Piéton. At 4am on 15 June the 24th Inf Regt heard that the outposts of the 2nd Bde had been attacked (see below), so it moved to its assembly point at Piéton with the pickets of its Fusilier Bn covering the withdrawal.

Having assembled, the 1st Bde withdrew towards Gosselies via Courcelles. Along with Horse Battery No. 7, the 4th (1st Silesian) Hussars covered the withdrawal, together with the 6th Uhlans from the I Corps reserve cavalry. The hussars deployed their carbine-armed flankers, who engaged French infantry skirmishers in the tall crops around the village of Mellet. Around midday the Prussian cavalry was driven back, so it was left to the Fusilier Bn/24th Inf and two companies of Silesian Schützen to cover the withdrawal of the brigade to Fleurus. They took up positions behind the hedges lining the road, and fired on the advancing French with such effect that the pursuit was broken off. The brigade spent the night at Gosselies before moving off for St Amand the next morning.

2nd Brigade

Early on the morning of 15 June three cannon shots were heard from the direction of Mont-sur-Marchienne – a pre-arranged signal to indicate that the anticipated French attack had started. The 6th Inf Regt concentrated at its assembly points: 3rd and 4th Cos of 1st Bn formed up in the square at the inn of Trois Bras, while 1st Co held the exit towards Marchienne-au-Pont and 2nd Co the exit towards Marcinelle. The volunteer detachment was posted along the near bank of the Sambre, facing Marchienne-au-Pont. The 2nd Bn had spent the night in Mont-sur-Marchienne to cover the alarm cannons, and at 5am it was ordered to Marchienne-au-Pont. On hearing the signal the Fusilier Bn moved to Montigny but, not expecting an attack there, deployed only one company, with the other three drawing up in support behind Montigny on the road to Gilly.

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The advancing French first attacked the 2nd Bde at Thuin, then at Fontaine l'Evêque, and forced the Fusilier Bn/2nd Westphalian Landwehr out of Gerpinnes. Three of its companies fell back on the 28th Inf in the direction of Châtelet; 4th Co went in the direction of Marcinelle, but was overtaken by French cavalry at Couillet, ridden down and taken prisoner. Groups of French cavalry then approached Marcinelle, which was connected to Charleroi by an embankment 300 paces long ending at the bridge over the Sambre. Skirmishers from 2nd Co, 1st Bn/6th Inf took up positions behind hedges, in ditches and on the side of the embankment, and drove back the French cavalry with their fire.

A little later, fighting started in the suburbs of Charleroi, where the skirmishers of 2nd Bn/6th Inf held the entrance to the town. The French then drew up on the windmill hill and directed artillery fire into their positions, forcing the Prussians to withdraw over the bridge, which they then barricaded and held for as long as they could against mounting odds. The 2nd Bde then fell back on Gilly, taking up positions on the slope. The Fusilier Bn/6th Inf deployed in a wood; four cannon were placed on a ridge to its right, two more between there and the highway to Fleurus, with the last two on the highway itself opposite the defile from Gilly. The battalion's skirmishers drew up behind hedges and between the guns to cover them.

The brigade was then involved in a bitter withdrawing action, in which it suffered heavily. It arrived at Ligny at 11pm, having been in combat since 6am.

The 3rd (Brandenburg) Uhlans from the I Corps reserve cavalry had been ordered to cover the retreat. They did so by deploying their flankers and supporting them with the 1st and 3rd Sqns; that night 100 troopers were used as pickets, with a further 100 in reserve.

THE BATTLE OF LIGNY, 16 JUNE

Here, I Army Corps bore the brunt of the French assaults and suffered heavily, as the regimental after-action reports and other eyewitness accounts make clear.

The deployment of the Prussian Army was south-west of the village of Sombreffe, on a 'V'-shaped front facing roughly south-west and south-east, amid fields of tall crops (see map on page 33.) The village of Ligny was in the centre; north-west of it was Brye, where a windmill on a hill offered Blücher's headquarters a vantage-point. To the west and south-west were a line of small villages: running roughly from north-west to south-east, these were Wagnelée, St Amand-la-Haye slightly behind the line, and St Amand. Sturdily built and surrounded by trees and hedges, these offered strong anchors; they would be the focus of the fighting by I Army Corps on the Prussian right, supported by II Army Corps, while III Army Corps held the Prussian left and IV Army Corps stayed in reserve.

I Army Corps:

1st Brigade

At 6am on 16 June the 1st Bde moved up towards the village of St Amand. They were provided with rations at Sombreffe, and at 1pm were ordered to cook a meal as soon as possible; this was probably the first warm food they had had for two days. The brigade commander MajGen Steinmetz stipulated the following order-of-battle:

(continued on page 33)

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BEFORE LIGNY, 16 JUNE
1: Gen FM Blücher
2: LtGen von Gneisenau
3: Cavalry ADC to General Staff

A

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B

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II ARMY CORPS THE MARCH TO WAVRE, 17 JUNE
1: Gunner, 6-pdr Foot Battery No. 34
2: Officer, Foot Artillery
3: Trooper, Elbe Landwehr Cav Regt

D

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IV ARMY CORPS BEFORE PLANCENOIT, 18 JUNE
1: Trooper, 6th (2nd Silesian) Hussar Regt
2: Fusilier, 10th (1st Silesian) Inf Regt
3: Militiaman, 2nd Neumark Landwehr Inf Regt
1
2
3

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III ARMY CORPS; WAVRE, 18–19 JUNE
1: Musketeer, 31st Infantry Regiment
2: Gunner, 6-pdr Horse Battery No. 18
3: Trooper, 7th Uhlan Regiment

G

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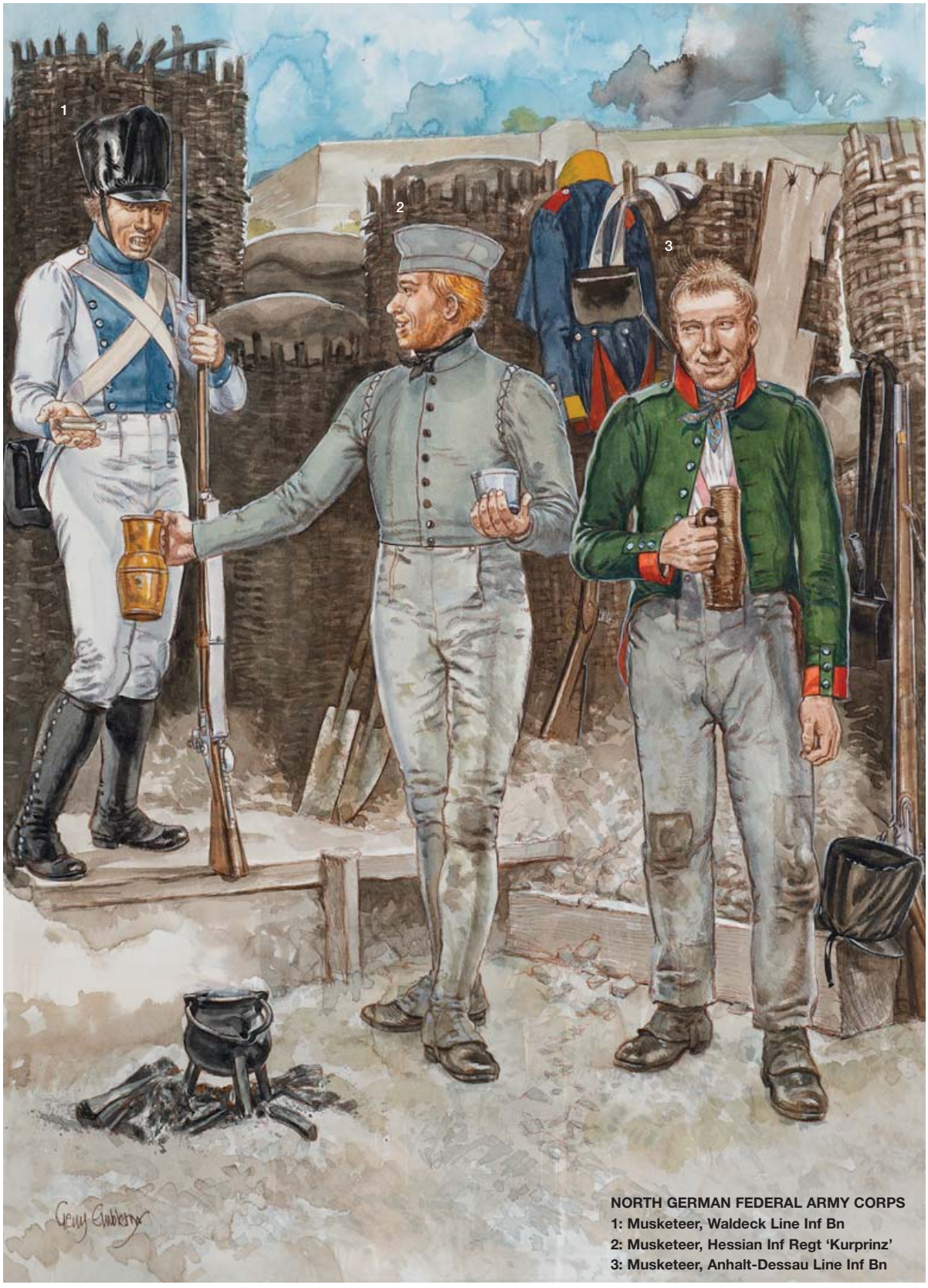

NORTH GERMAN FEDERAL ARMY CORPS
1: Musketeer, Waldeck Line Inf Bn
2: Musketeer, Hessian Inf Regt 'Kurprinz'
3: Musketeer, Anhalt-Dessau Line Inf Bn

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1st Line: Fusilier battalions of 12th and 24th Inf Regts, and two companies of Schützen, under the command of Maj von Blücher of the 24th Infantry.

One 6-pdr foot battery placed between the 1st and 2nd Lines.

2nd Line: The four musketeer battalions of the 24th and 12th Infantry, under the command of Col von Hoffmann.

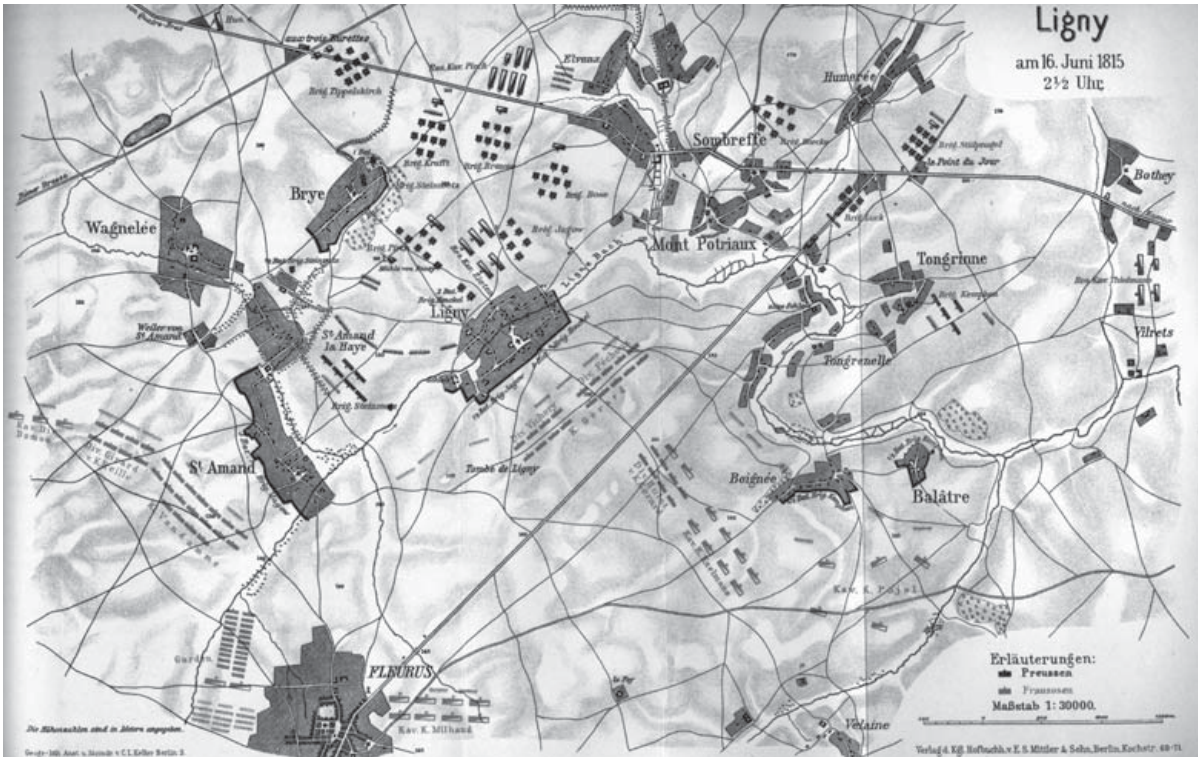
3rd Line: 1st Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt, under Maj von Hülfen.

Reserve: Horse battery, between pairs of squadrons of 4th (1st Silesian) Hussars.

Their orders read as follows: 'The bivouac area is not the place of battle, so should any firing be directed on Brye the men should stand-to immediately and move in this order-of-battle into the position taken up by the corps artillery [on the heights north-east of St Amand]. The Fusilier Bn of the 24th Regt is to occupy the village of Brye, while Major von Neumann is to hold the village of St Amand-la-Haye with two companies of Schützen and the Fusilier Bn of the 12th Regt and is to defend it with the greatest determination.'

At 2pm the brigade stood-to, and shortly afterwards the artillery of both sides opened the battle. At around 2.30pm the 1st Bde observed divisions of Vandamme's French III Corps moving towards its positions. The skirmish lines engaged each other, and the French stormed St Amand-la-Haye and a nearby farmhouse. Three battalions of Jagow's 3rd Bde were driven back, so Steinmetz ordered Hoffmann to counter-attack with 1st Bde, which he did in the formation shown on page 21. The 12th Regt marched on St Amand-la-Haye, while the 24th moved against the French now in St Amand. The French skirmish line was driven back, but the French troops in St Amand-la-Haye staged a counter-attack.

Prussian dispositions at Ligny at about 2.30pm. The scale line at bottom right is marked at intervals of 500 metres. At left centre, most of I Army Corps is drawn up in the fields between the villages, with Steinmetz's 1st Bde forward between St Amand-la-Haye and St Amand. Pirch II's 2nd Bde, Jagow's 3rd Bde and Henckel's 4th Bde are between Brye and Ligny, with the reserve cavalry. The villages of Brye, St Amand and Ligny are shown at this stage defended only by fusilier skirmishers from 3rd and 4th Bdes, and Wagnelée and St Amand-la-Haye are unoccupied. Spread across the Prussian rear, west of Sombreffe, are II Army Corps: Tippelskirch's 5th Bde, Krafft's 6th Bde, Brause's 7th Bde, and Bose's 8th Bde. To the east, around Sombreffe and Tongrinne, are III Army Corps: Borcke's 9th Bde, Luck's 11th Bde, Stülpnagel's 12th Bde, and Kemphen's 10th Bde, with one of the latter's battalions divided between Boignée and Balâtre to the south.



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The foot battery attached to the 1st Bde fired on the advancing French, while the 12th Regt charged into St Amand-la-Haye. It failed to retake the hamlet, and was driven back out in hand-to-hand fighting. The loss of St Amand-la-Haye now threatened the integrity of Blücher's right.

2nd Brigade

When the 1st Bde was driven back the 2nd Bde was ordered forward. At the head of the 1st Bn/6th Inf Regt, MajGen von Pirch II led his brigade towards St Amand just as the French forced Steinmetz out of St Amand-la-Haye. The first line of the 2nd Bde, consisting of the 28th Inf Regt and 2nd Westphalian Landwehr, forced their way into St Amand and pushed the French back to a farmhouse between it and St Amand-la-Haye. After hard fighting the 1st Bn/6th Inf was forced back to a line of hedges outside St Amand; the 2nd Bn was sent in to retake it, but the unit's skirmishers were unable to make any progress. When French skirmishers tried to take 1st Bn in the flank its 1st and 8th Sections drew up behind the hedges and drove them back under a crossfire. A second Prussian attack on St Amand was ordered, which succeeded only in taking the farm between the two villages. Confusion reigned as close combat swayed back and forth among the buildings, with men of different companies becoming mixed together.

The French now consolidated, and shelled the Prussian positions before sending in a line of skirmishers with its left flank slightly refused. The Brandenburg Uhlans, followed by the 1st Westphalian Landwehr Cavalry, took the opportunity to hit the French skirmish line in the flank, rolling it up and throwing it back.

Support from II Army Corps

At some time after 5pm, Tippelskirch's 5th Bde of II Army Corps broke through at Wagnelée, but an attempt to take the French in their left flank was frustrated by French reinforcements. Blücher personally organized yet another counter-attack, and this drove the French some 800 paces back from St Amand. However, control then broke down as ill-disciplined infantry rushed forward, and the officers had to make considerable efforts to get them back to the village to rally.

The French then staged a further attack. Major-General von Pirch II (2nd Bde, I Army Corps) had withdrawn his exhausted 28th Inf and 2nd Westphalian Landwehr regiments from St Amand, and his 6th Inf Regt, which he pulled back into the centre of the village, now ran out of ammunition. The 6th Bde (II Army Corps) now moved up in support as the 2nd Bn/6th Inf was sent into St Amand. It pressed home and took a number of buildings, but had to detach parties of men to the left and right in confused street-fighting; thus dispersed, and lacking ammunition, it was unable to fight off local counter-attacks.

Meanwhile, in the centre, since around 3pm the French IV Corps had been fighting for Ligny. Set ablaze by artillery, the centre of the village changed hands three times in vicious house-to-house fighting, in which Jagow's 3rd Bde played a successful part at one point. From about 5pm the sighting, to the west, of d'Erlon's French I Corps on its confused and profitless marches between Quatre-Bras and Ligny distracted both commanders. Blücher ordered another counter-attack on the French left flank, but this was thrown back by the Young Guard.

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By perhaps 7pm something of a lull had fallen over Wagnelée, St Amand-la-Haye and St Amand, where the Prussians still held lodgements; but the fighting for Ligny itself was desperate, and to the east the French cavalry had taken Tongrinelle. In a last throw, Blücher led an attack that cleared St Amand but was driven back by the Imperial Guard west of it, and this caused a Prussian retreat from St Amand-la-Haye. A thunderstorm now broke over the battlefield; it was followed at about 7.45pm by a bombardment by 60 guns, as Napoleon launched both Gérard's tired IV Corps and the fresh Old Guard at Ligny, with support from his reserve cavalry. This massive fist finally smashed through the Prussian centre at 8.30pm. With Blücher disabled while leading a cavalry charge, LtGen von Gneisenau organized an orderly retreat northwards, in the order IV, I, II and III Army Corps. While some Landwehr fled in disorder, the main retreat was controlled; Gneisenau brought off the wagon trains and most of the artillery safely, and the rearguards did not leave the field until after midnight.

The En Haut ('Upper') farmhouse near Ligny as it is today; on 16 June 1815 it was the scene of fierce fighting. Strong, quadrilateral complexes of brick-built farm buildings and high-walled yards formed virtual fortresses during the battles of Ligny and Waterloo, and were often successfully defended until they were battered by artillery or set on fire by howitzer shells.

III Army Corps at Wavre, 18–19 June

On 17 June, Marshal Grouchy's pursuit with the right wing of the Armée du Nord lacked urgency. The Prussians reached Wavre and regrouped largely unmolested, and at about 4am on the morning of the 18th IV Army Corps began its march westwards to link up with Wellington's army at Waterloo. Napoleon gave Grouchy clear orders to attack the Prussians at Wavre, but by the time he was in a position to do so it was mid-afternoon; by then some 72,000 men of the IV, II and I Army Corps were well on their way to Waterloo. Only LtGen von Thielemann's III Army Corps of about 17,000 men were left to hold the Dyle river crossings at Wavre against Grouchy's 33,000, but they successfully accomplished this for as long as it mattered. Hard close-quarter fighting lasted from 4pm until about midnight, and resumed on the morning of 19 June. The Kurmark Landwehr and 30th and 31st Inf Regts of the Prussian 9th, 10th and 12th Bdes distinguished themselves in stubborn fighting for the bridges and the streets of the town, and by the time Grouchy finally achieved a bridgehead at Limale and obliged Thielemann to retreat on 19 June it was far too late. Half an hour later, the arrival of news of the Allied victory at Waterloo obliged Grouchy to begin his own hasty retreat towards Paris.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, 18 JUNE

Since the IV Army Corps, due to failures in staff work, had failed to reach the battlefield of Ligny on 16 June, it was selected to lead the attack against the French right wing at Waterloo. Although it was the furthest away from that battlefield, it was the freshest force available and was fully supplied with ammunition. This corps led the attack towards Plancenoit, the key village in the right rear of the French position, the eventual capture of which by II Army Corps units decided the outcome of Waterloo.

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Infantry General Friedrich Wilhelm, Graf Bülow von Dennewitz (1755–1816). His IV Army Corps, with twice the usual proportion of Landwehr militia, had been intended to act as the reserve for the Army of the Lower Rhine. However, since it had not been engaged at Ligny it was chosen to lead the march westwards from Wavre to Waterloo.

IV Army Corps:
15th Brigade

At 4pm on 18 June, Wellington's position along the low ridge of Mont St Jean was under critical threat; but he knew that his resuers were about to attack, and all he had to do was hang on.

The lead brigade of IV Army Corps was the 15th, under MajGen von Losthin, with *c.*6,100 infantry of the 18th Inf and 3rd and 4th Silesian Landwehr. In addition to its supporting Silesian Landwehr cavalry squadrons and its 6-pdr battery, it was also provided with the 6th (2nd Silesian) Hussars, and a 12-pdr foot battery, from the Corps reserve.

To their right front the advancing brigade sighted a French patrol on the high ground to the left of Fichermont, so the order was given to attack Fichermont château. To their right of this lay the hamlet of Smohain, and further on La Haye and Papelotte farms. Two batteries of artillery were sent forward, and their opening salvo announced to Wellington the start of the Prussians' intervention. At about 4.30pm Losthin's brigade moved off from the eves of Paris Wood; behind the vanguard the first line of the main body consisted of the 1st and Fusilier Bns/18th Inf Regt, and 1st and 2nd Bns/3rd Silesian Landwehr Infantry. The 4th Silesian Landwehr Inf formed the second line, with cavalry and artillery in support. The 16th Bde (Col von Hiller, with a similar strength) advanced on Losthin's left: the 15th Inf, and 1st and 2nd Silesian Landwehr.

Losthin's vanguard deployed its skirmishers towards Fichermont on the right, while the rest of the brigade, with cavalry and artillery in support, moved forward towards Plancenoit down a slight valley to the left of Fichermont. The Prussian fusiliers mistook Nassau troops from Wellington's army, who were occupying Fichermont, Smohain and La Haye, for Frenchmen, and ejected them. The bulk of the brigade moved on south-westwards, driving units of Lobau's VI Corps before them, with Hiller covering their left flank. Around 6pm a French counter-attack retook Smohain and parts of Fichermont, but Prussian cavalry and a horse battery (1st Neumark Landwehr and 1st Pomeranian Landwehr Cav Regts, and 6th (2nd Silesian) Hussars) helped restore the situation. The latter rode down a French skirmish line, and tumbled a supporting regiment of chasseurs into confusion.

Lobau's battalions fought in retreat, delaying but not halting the advancing 15th Bde as Losthin skilfully alternated advances by his skirmishers, guns, infantry and cavalry. At one point, however, the 12-pdr battery attached to the 15th Bde was pushed forward through the centre of the advancing infantry columns in such a way that the brigade was divided in two. The left part, under Maj von Krahn, consisted of two battalions of the 3rd Silesian Landwehr followed by 3rd Bn/4th Silesian Landwehr. The right-hand force, led by Col von Massow, was made up of 1st and Fusilier Bns/18th Inf Regt, and the remaining two battalions of 4th Silesian Landwehr. This unexpected dislocation caused considerable confusion; no skirmish screen was deployed, resulting in the infantry columns suffering heavy casualties as they advanced.

The IV Army Corps commander, Gen Bülow, ordered them to fall back, and the first Prussian advance towards Plancenoit now came to a halt while reinforcements were brought up. The second push commenced at about 6pm, led by LtGen von Hake's 13th and MajGen von Ryssel's 14th Bdes, with the now tired 15th and 16th Bdes following up in reserve.

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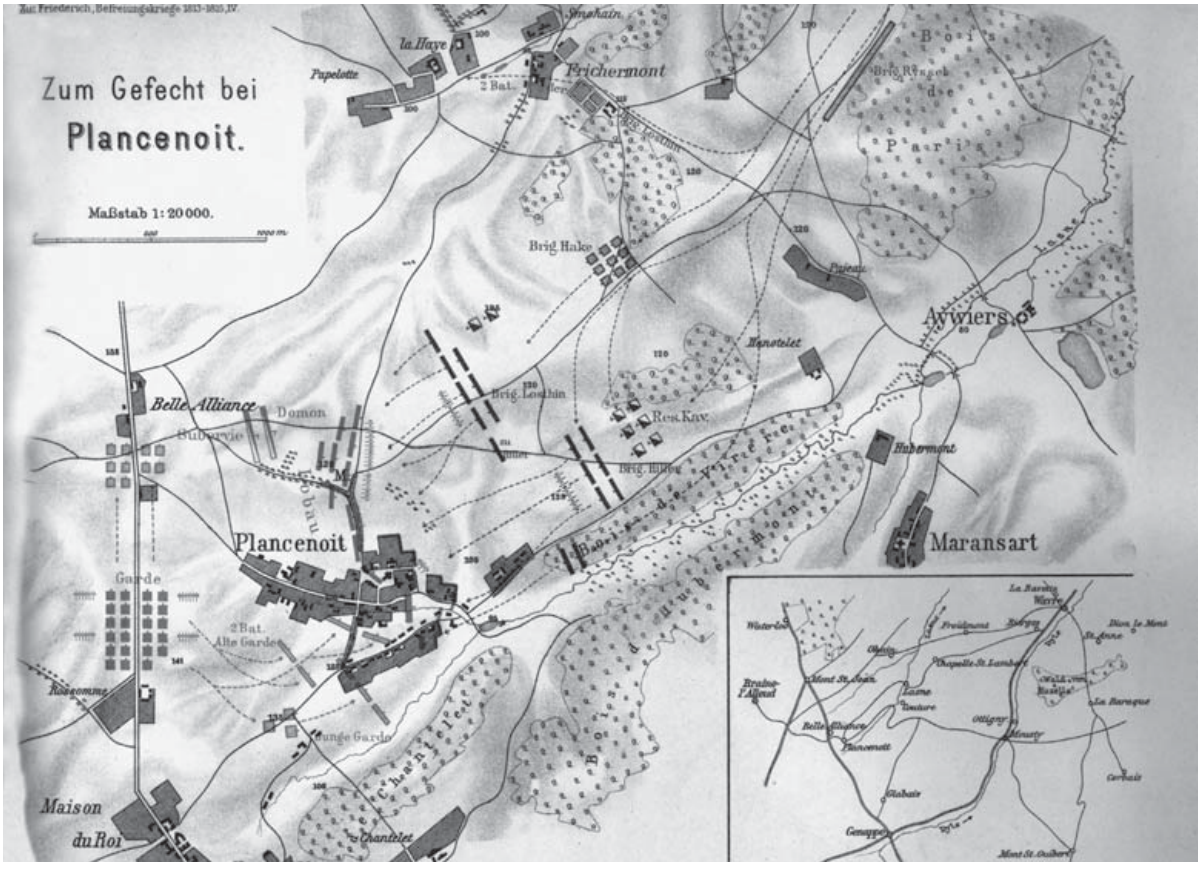

Initial phases of the fighting by IV Army Corps before Plancenoit, between about 4.30 and 6.30pm; the scale line at top left is marked at intervals of 500 metres.
At top centre, the early diversion of two fusilier battalions from Losthin's 15th Bde north-westwards to Fichermont and La Haye is indicated.
At centre, the rest of Losthin's brigade is advancing south-westwards well south of Fichermont; Hiller's 16th Bde follows slightly behind its left flank.
At upper centre, and in column at top right on the edge of the Bois de Paris, Hake's 13th Bde and Ryssel's 14th Bde are still on the march. The Prussian II Army Corps brigades that made the final successful assaults have not yet appeared in the area of the map.

13th Brigade

This consisted of the 10th (1st Silesian) Inf Regt and 2nd and 3rd Neumark Landwehr Inf Regts, supported by two squadrons of the 2nd Silesian Landwehr Cavalry and a 6-pdr foot battery. The war diary of the 2nd Neumark Landwehr described the situation as follows:

> After the 13th Bde, which had been held in reserve, passed through the previously mentioned defile [from St Lambert to Lasne] and the Fichermont woods, it arrived on the battlefield, advanced towards the village of Fichermont, and, at 5pm, under the orders of LtGen von Hake, drew up facing the enemy, with the 1st Bn of the 2nd Neumark Landwehr Regt on the right flank towards Fichermont in the first line, the 2nd Bn to its left in the same line, and the Fusilier Bn in front of both these battalions.

Each battalion fought individually, and each of their commanders wrote separate reports. Major von Steinmetz of the 1st Bn, 2nd Neumark Landwehr reported:

> First, the skirmishers moved into the village of Fichermont, with the battalion in support. Shortly after that, the regimental commander Maj von Braunschweig ordered the battalion to move into the village and to occupy both it and the road linking the Prussian and English armies. As the skirmishers had in the meantime already

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Well-known painting by Adolph Northen, showing Prussian line infantry of the 5th Bde attacking positions held by the 2nd Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard in Plancenoit on the evening of 18 June. It convincingly captures the atmosphere of cramped street-fighting in a blazing village.
Notwithstanding the standard Prussian doctrine for bringing a brigade into battle, in the inevitably confused house-to-house fighting ad hoc 'battle groups' including men from different units might be formed at need. When Prussian units were ejected from a village, fresh troops would be brought up and deployed in their turn, while the beaten troops might reform and prepare to attack once again. This ebb and flow of battle was very evident in the fighting for Ligny and St Amand on 16 June and Plancenoit on the 18th, with attacks and counter-attacks thrown in successively until one side or the other had run out of fresh troops or had been decisively driven back.

moved through the village, Maj von Steinmetz had only the 1st Co moved up to support them. Two companies held the defile mentioned earlier, while the two other companies of the battalion moved up to the left. Major von Steinmetz received the report that the 1st Co under Capt Sotta had thrown back the enemy, who had been putting our skirmish line under considerable pressure.

The remainder of the battalion then followed up, going about 1,000 paces from Fichermont in the direction of La Belle Alliance [*sic*], when Maj von Braunschweig pulled them back again into their previous positions to await further events. However, the advance parties did not rejoin the battalion until the following day.

They found some skirmisher sections from the 18th Inf Regt and a detachment of Nassauers holding the village of Fichermont. As there was no sign of the enemy here, they passed through the village and then closed up. Beyond the village they came into contact with enemy troops positioned behind the hedges and in gardens, attacked them, and threw them back. A number of the skirmishers continued advancing continuously until the late evening, passing through Genappe before stopping in the next village, as the onset of darkness prevented the pursuit of the enemy being continued.

14th Brigade

This consisted of the 11th (2nd Silesian) Inf Regt and 1st and 2nd Pomeranian Landwehr Inf Regts, with two squadrons of the 2nd Silesian Landwehr Cavalry Regt and a 6-pdr foot battery. (The 5th Bde from II Army Corps was also now moving up in support – see below).

Prussian cavalry drove back the line of French skirmishers that had formed outside Plancenoit, and infantry fought their way into the village. By now, Napoleon's Young Guard had been committed to the fighting for the southern part of Plancenoit. They ejected the Prussians once, but were then drawn into renewed house-to-house fighting. At some stage during the fighting to take the churchyard in Plancenoit the 1st Bn/11th Inf Regt undertook a series of bayonet charges. The church with its stone-walled graveyard stood then, as it does now, on a small rise in the centre of the village, and was the key to its defence. The battalion's losses that day amounted to its commander, one NCO and 15 men dead, with five officers, seven NCOs and 110 men wounded.

Napoleon's final throw of the dice in the struggle for Plancenoit was to commit two battalions of his precious Old Guard. They cleared the

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village quickly, allowing Napoleon the opportunity of staging his final attack by the Middle Guard on Wellington's centre unimpeded, though by now fatally weakened. The defeated Prussians reformed outside the village, while fresh troops drew up for the final and successful assault upon it, which took place from about 8pm.

II Army Corps:

5th Brigade

It was now the turn of the 25th Inf Regt, the ragged and ill-equipped former irregulars of Lützow's Freikorps, to play a role in the decisive action of the battle – the capture of Plancenoit.

II Army Corps joined the battle at about 7pm, its vanguard consisting of the fusilier battalions of the 2nd and 25th Inf Regiments. They arrived at the point when the Young Guard had driven the 14th Bde out of Plancenoit, and they marched onto a ridge 800 paces from the village. Major-General von Tippelskirch's 5th Bde was deployed in its battle formation, in lines of columns by the centre, with Foot Battery No. 10 giving supporting fire. The Fusilier Bn/25th Inf was ordered to go south of the village through Chantelet Wood, while its two musketeer battalions were sent to Virere Wood to cover the left of the attack.

Realizing that the possession of Plancenoit was the key to the battle, Napoleon now sent in two battalions of his Old Guard to reinforce his troops there, and (as noted above) these veterans cleared the village once again. The vanguard of the Prussian II Army Corps now crossed the Lasne Brook, driving back the French skirmishers deployed in the broken terrain. Under heavy artillery fire it pressed on, with its skirmishers making full use of the cover. At the edge of the woods the foremost Prussians took heavy fire from a French skirmish line. Two sections of skirmishers were sent into protruding parts of the edge of the wood; the battalion followed up in column marching at the double, driving out the 1st Bn/2nd Guard Grenadier Regiment.

Meanwhile, the two musketeer battalions of the 25th Inf Regt were ordered to move to occupy Virere Wood. They advanced to the small brook running through Plancenoit eastwards into the Lasne Brook. At this point, in the gap between Virere Wood and Chantelet Wood, the two battalions followed the fusiliers manoeuvring around the south of Plancenoit, so providing support and a point of withdrawal for the fusiliers while covering the Prussian left flank.

Once the 25th Inf had completed its successful flanking manoeuvre, the remainder of the brigade could now attack Plancenoit frontally. The Imperial Guard defended their positions with determination, but eventually, with their right flank threatened, they began to waver; the church was now on fire, and flames and smoke added to the confusion of the bloody house-to-house fighting. At last the Imperial Guard fell back, abandoning not only Plancenoit but their artillery, ammunition and baggage wagons. They retired in good order until taken in the right flank by the Fusilier Bn/25th Inf, advancing from Chantelet Wood to the highroad at Le Caillou; then their control broke down, and the Guard's ordered retreat became a flight. The fusiliers of the 25th Inf were the first Prussian troops to reach the highway. The battle of Waterloo had now entered its final phase, as the French centre and right collapsed into rout.

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The field of Waterloo at about 7.45pm. This map, *NB: oriented with south at the top and north at the bottom*, is taken from the guidebook published to accompany the first exhibition of Siborne's 'Large Model of the Battle of Waterloo'. When Siborne's model was first unveiled it included models representing 48,000 Prussian soldiers, advancing westwards on a broad front against the whole French right flank; at Wellington's insistence, Siborne later had to remove 40,000 of them so as to give a less graphic impression of the importance of Blücher's contribution to the victory.

North German Federal Army Corps

The campaign did not end with Napoleon's defeat in the Netherlands. Thanks to Marshal Grouchy's skilful withdrawal, Napoleon still had part of an army in being. Memories of his repeated escapes from defeat during the 1814 French campaign were still fresh in the minds of many in the Army of the Lower Rhine, so every effort was made to conduct an effective pursuit. Part of that requirement would be to take enough of the fortresses in northern France to deny the surviving French units rallying points at which they could rearm and resupply. This is where the North Germans came to play their part.

One of the sieges in which they participated was that of Mézières, which lasted from 28 June to 10 August 1815. This fortress and the adjoining town of Charleville represented an important depot, containing substantial stores of firearms and ammunition as well as two arms factories, a powder mill and an ammunition factory. Apart from its

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Prussian Army at Waterloo, 18 June 1815

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all infantry regiments had 3 battalions; all cavalry regiments, 4 squadrons; and all batteries, 6 guns and 2 howitzers.

I ARMY CORPS: LtGen von Zieten
1st Brigade: MajGen von Steinmetz
12th Infantry Regiment
24th Inf Regt
1st Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Companies/Silesian Schützen Battalion
4th (1st Silesian) Hussar Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 7

2nd Brigade: MajGen von Pirch II
6th (1st W. Prussian) Inf Regt
28th Inf Regt
2nd Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt
1st Westphalian Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 3 (5 guns, 2 howitzers)

3rd Brigade: MajGen von Jagow
7th (2nd W. Prussian) Inf Regt
29th Inf Regt
3rd Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 2nd Cos/Silesian Schützen Bn
6-pdr Battery No. 8

4th Brigade: MajGen Henckel von Donnersmarck
19th Inf Regt
4th Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 15

I Corps Reserve Cavalry: MajGen von Roeder
1st Brigade: MajGen von Treskow
5th Dragoon Regt
2nd (1st W. Prussian) Dragoon Regt
3rd (Brandenburg) Uhlan Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 2
2nd Brigade: Col von Lützow
6th Uhlan Regt
1st Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt
2nd Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 7

I Corps Reserve Artillery: Col von Rentzell
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 2
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 6
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 1
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 10
7-pdr Howitzer Battery No. 1 (8 howitzers)
Engineer Company No. 1

II ARMY CORPS: LtGen von Pirch I
5th Brigade: MajGen von Tippelskirch
2nd (1st Pomeranian) Inf Regt
25th Inf Regt
5th Westphalian Landwehr Inf Regt
Feldjäger Co
1st & 2nd Squadrons/11th Hussar Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 10

6th Brigade: MajGen von Krafft
9th (Colberg) Inf Regt
26th Inf Regt
1st Elbe Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Sqns/11th Hussar Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 5

7th Brigade: MajGen von Brause
14th Inf Regt
22nd Inf Regt
2nd Elbe Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 3rd Sqns/Elbe Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 34 (British guns)

8th Brigade: MajGen von Bose
21st Inf Regt
23rd Inf Regt
3rd Elbe Landwehr Inf Regt
2nd & 4th Sqns/Elbe Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 12 (6 guns, 1 howitzer)

II Corps Reserve Cavalry: MajGen von Wahlen-Jürgass
1st Brigade: MajGen von Thümen
1st (Queen's) Dragoon Regt
6th (Neumark) Dragoon Regt
2nd (Silesian) Uhlan Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 6
2nd Brigade: Col von Sohr
3rd (Brandenburg) Hussar Regt
5th (Pomeranian) Hussar Regt
3rd Brigade: Col von der Schulenburg
4th Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt
5th Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt

II Corps Reserve Artillery: Maj Lehmann
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 4
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 8
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 37
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 5
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 14
Engineer Co No. 7

IV ARMY CORPS: Gen Count Bülow von Dennewitz
13th Brigade: LtGen von Hake
10th (1st Silesian) Inf Regt
2nd Neumark Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd Neumark Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 2nd Sqns/2nd Silesian Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 21

14th Brigade: MajGen von Ryssel
11th (2nd Silesian) Inf Regt
1st Pomeranian Landwehr Inf Regt
2nd Pomeranian Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Sqns/2nd Silesian Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 13

15th Brigade: MajGen von Losthin
18th (1st Westphalian) Inf Regt
3rd Silesian Landwehr Inf Regt
4th Silesian Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 2nd Sqns/3rd Silesian Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 14

16th Brigade: Col von Hiller
15th Inf Regt
1st Silesian Landwehr Inf Regt
2nd Silesian Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Sqns/3rd Silesian Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 2

IV Corps Reserve Cavalry: MajGen Prince Wilhelm of Prussia
1st Brigade: Col Count von Schwerin
6th (2nd Silesian) Hussar Regt
10th Hussar Regt
1st W. Prussian Uhlan Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 1
2nd Brigade: MajGen von Watzdorff
8th Hussar Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 12
3rd Brigade: Col von Sydow
1st Neumark Landwehr Cav Regt
2nd Neumark Landwehr Cav Regt
1st Pomeranian Landwehr Cav Regt
2nd Pomeranian Landwehr Cav Regt
1st Silesian Landwehr Cav Regt

IV Corps Reserve Artillery: Maj von Bardeleben
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 3
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 5
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 13
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 11
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 11 (British guns)
5th Engineer Co

importance to the French, if this place could be captured it would allow the North Germans to improve the armament and supply of their own unimpressive corps.

The French garrison consisted of 400 National Guardsmen (500 more had already deserted), 350 customs officers, stragglers and walking

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Prussian forces at Wavre, 18–19 June 1815

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all infantry regiments had 3 battalions; all cavalry regiments, 4 squadrons; and all batteries, 6 guns and 2 howitzers.

III ARMY CORPS: LtGen von Thielemann
9th Brigade: MajGen von Borcke
8th (Bodyguard/*Leib*) Inf Regt
30th Inf Regt
1st Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 2nd Sqns/3rd Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 18

10th Brigade: Col von Kemphen
27th Inf Regt
2nd Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Sqns/3rd Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt
6-pdr Foot Battery No. 35

11th Brigade: Col von Luck
3rd Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
4th Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
1st & 2nd Sqns/6th Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt

12th Brigade: Col von Stülpnagel
31st Inf Regt
5th Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
6th Kurmark Landwehr Inf Regt
3rd & 4th Sqns/6th Kurmark Landwehr Cav Regt

III Corps Reserve Cavalry: MajGen von Hobe
1st Brigade: Col von der Marwitz
7th Uhlan Regt
8th Uhlan Regt
12th Hussar Regt

2nd Brigade: Col Count von Lottum
5th Uhlan Regt
7th Dragoon Regt
9th Hussar Regt
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 20

III Corps Reserve Artillery: Maj von Grevenitz
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 7
12-pdr Foot Battery No. 12
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 18 (Russian guns)
6-pdr Horse Battery No. 19 (1x 6pdr, 2x howitzers - Russian)
Engineer Cos No. 4 & No. 5

North German Federal Army Corps

Commanding General: Gen Count Kleist von Nollendorf (Prussian),
later LtGen von Hake
Chief-of-Staff: Col von Witzleben (Prussian)
Commanding General of Hessian Troops:
LtGen von Engelhardt
Chief-of-Staff: Col von Dörnberg

1st (Hessian) Brigade: MajGen Prince of Solms-Braunfels
2nd Grenadier Bn von Lossberg
Inf Regt 'Landgraf Karl' (2 bns)
Inf Regt 'Prinz Solms' (2 bns)

2nd (Hessian) Brigade: MajGen von Müller
1st Grenadier Bn von Haller
Inf Regt 'Kurprinz' (3 bns)
Infantry Regt 'Prinz' (2 bns)
Jäger Bn

Hessian Cavalry Brigade: MajGen von Warburg (Prussian)
Life Dragoon Regt
Hussar Regt
Hessian Artillery: Maj von Bardeleben (Prussian)
6-pdr Battery No. 1
6-pdr Battery No. 2

3rd (Anhalt-Thuringian) Brigade: MajGen von Egloffstein (Weimar)
1st Provisional Inf Regt:
Saxe-Weimar Line Inf Bn
Saxe-Weimar Landwehr Bn
Anhalt-Dessau Line Inf Bn
Anhalt-Bernburg-Köthen Jäger Bn
2nd Provisional Inf Regt:
Saxe-Gotha Line Inf Bn
Saxe-Gotha Landwehr Bn
Schwarzburg Line Inf Bn
3rd Provisional Inf Regt:
Lippe Line Inf Bn
Lippe-Detmold Landwehr Bn
Waldeck Line Inf Bn
Oldenburg Line Inf Regt (2 bns)

wounded from Waterloo, plus the town's own National Guard: a total of 3,000 men with 60 guns. About another 1,000 National Guardsmen garrisoned Charleville.

Lieutenant-General von Hake took command of the besieging German forces on 28 June, posting the Thuringian Bde on the right bank of the Meuse and the Hessians on the left. Although no siege artillery was available, Hake had the Hessian LtGen von Engelhardt plan an assault on Charleville, which was executed the next day.

The storming force consisted of two Hessian fusilier battalions from the Inf Regts 'Kurprinz' (Prince Elector) and 'Prince Solms' and two companies of Jäger, supported by two squadrons of hussars, three guns, and a company of Prussian engineers. They deployed under the cover of buildings, gardens and a low ridge. After two requests for the surrender of the fortress had been rejected, the North Germans opened fire, but with little effect. The Hessian Jäger and Prussian engineers then cut down and climbed up parts of the palisades, before the gate was blown in. The town was then stormed and quickly surrendered, with minimal losses to the attackers. However, the siege of the other parts of this fortified place continued for nearly another six weeks.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: BEFORE LIGNY, 16 JUNE

Near the Bussy windmill at Brye, the general-in-chief and chief-of-staff of the Army of the Lower Rhine consider their dispositions. Maps were printed in black on white, pasted to a stiff backing, and several were sometimes bound together in leather covers. The Prussian general officers' uniform of the late Napoleonic Wars gave a sombre impression when compared with those of other armies; this partly reflected the Spartan military ethic of the kingdom, and partly a simple lack of wealth.

A1: General-Field Marshal Prince Blücher von Wahlstatt

The 1814 single-breasted undress coatee worn as field uniform is Prussian blue with the plain collar and Swedish cuffs faced with the poppy-red of the General Staff; this colour also appears as piping down the eight-button front, and in the lining and turnbacks of the coat-tails. All buttons are gilt. He wears the silver epaulettes of December 1813 regulations, with metal crescents and thick twist fringes. The long-tasselled silver-and-black waist sash marking officer status is knotted on the left hip. The decorations at his throat are the Pour le Mérite, hanging above the Iron Cross and the Russian Cross of St George 3rd Class. Pinned to his left breast is the star of the Order of the Black Eagle. The general's overalls are of the latest type, with double red stripes. He carries a large grey riding overcoat and, under his right arm, a peaked field cap with an oilcloth rain-cover. Later 19th-century artists seem to have been influenced by the styles of their own day in showing such caps as too low and 'squashy'; period examples tend to be taller.

A2: Lieutenant-General Count Neidhardt von Gneisenau

The regulation headgear for non-regimental officers was the felt bicorn hat, here (as usual) protected from bad weather by a laced-on oilcloth cover, and worn fore-and-aft. Gneisenau's uniform and decorations are identical to those of Blücher, except for his breast star of the Order of the Red Eagle.

A3: Cavalry aide-de-camp, General Staff

His coatee is in the white of the heavy cavalry arm, with the poppy-red collar and cuffs of the General Staff bearing two bars of gold *Litzen*. He has a captain's 1812–14 left shoulder strap, and ADC's gold aiguillettes on his right shoulder. His tightly fitting riding overalls have red piping along the outseam edge and many brass buttons; they are strapped beneath half-boots with screw-on spurs. His epée sword, like those of the generals, is worn from a black concealed belt and slings but in a white frog, with the standard officers' silver-and-black fiststrap and knot.

B: I ARMY CORPS; LIGNY, 16 JUNE

By 1815 the new 1814 regulation infantry coatee, recognizable by its closed, square-cut collar instead of the taller 'V-cut' collar of the 1808 uniform, was distinguished by facings at collar and cuffs in an enlarged range of provincial colours: East Prussia – dull orange; Pomerania – white; Brandenburg – poppy-red; West Prussia, Neumark, Kurmark – carmine-red; Silesia – yellow; Elbe – light blue; Westphalia – pink, or green; Rhineland – madder-red.

Within each provincial sequence, the shoulder straps for 1st–4th regiments were to be white, red, yellow and light blue respectively. Thus, for instance, a musketeer of the 2nd (1st Pomeranian) Inf Regt would have all white facings and shoulder straps; while the 16th (3rd W. Prussian) Inf Regt wore carmine-red facings but yellow shoulder straps. Officially, the line numbers were supposed to be sewn/embroidered on the shoulder straps in red on yellow straps, and in yellow on all other colours. However, as regimental entries in the chapter 'Uniforms & Equipment' make clear, the rank-and-file of very many units in the impoverished Army of the Lower Rhine wore a motley collection of clothing and distinctions, due both to their recent creation from very diverse antecedent units, and to delays in supplying them.

B1: Musketeer, 24th Infantry Regiment

One of an ad hoc group from units of the 1st Bde storming the church in St Amand, this man recently arrived from the depot in Brandenburg wears the regulation 1814 coatee provided to him there, with the poppy-red facings and light blue shoulder straps of this regiment. His 1814 shako has the ubiquitous black oilcloth cover, laced up the back, and slightly distorted at top front centre by the oval black-and-white pompon cockade fixed to the shako beneath it. In the 1812–14 campaigns a white circle to represent the cockade was often seen painted on the front of the cover, but not during the Hundred Days' campaign. The off-white linen trousers used for warm-weather fatigues and campaigning are worn over dark grey cloth gaiters and black shoes. Under the 'horseshoe' of his rolled greatcoat he has two white crossbelts, even though shortswords were very rare after 1813 and were usually carried only by some NCOs. He has a calfskin knapsack, with the usual cloth-covered canteen strapped to it. His weapon is the old 1782 Prussian musket, habitually carried with the bayonet fixed.

B2: Officer, Silesian *Schützen* Battalion

While officers had generally purchased regulation clothing by 1815, by no means all of them could afford the costly silver-and-black sash, or the silver-bullion fringeless and fringed epaulettes that were ordered to replace shoulder straps from December 1813. This major of Sharpshooters has the sash, but still wears pre-1814 shoulder straps. The shako cover hides all signs of officer status except the brass chinscales. His long-tailed coatee is in the dark green of this unit, with black facings piped in red, and he wears many-buttoned overalls also piped red. Officers of these light troops carried knapsacks like their men.

B3: Fusilier, 12th Infantry Regiment

This veteran (probably formerly from 3rd Bn/1st W. Prussian Inf Regt) has one of several types of clothing provided for the new 12th Inf Regt: a captured French 1812 *habit-veste*, worn with the plastron buttoned across to hide the white side, replacement solid-red collar facing, and the 'N' cypher removed from the tail turnbacks. He has a fusilier's blackened crossbelt equipment, and carries a French Charleville musket.

C: I ARMY CORPS BEFORE LIGNY, 16 JUNE

C1: Musketeer, 29th Infantry Regiment

Resting on the high ground above Ligny village, this soldier from Berg serves in a 3rd Bde unit that was formerly part of the forces of the Confederation of the Rhine. It had not yet received its new Prussian uniforms, so went to war in its old French-style white Berg uniforms. To prevent them being mistaken for French troops they were ordered to wear their grey greatcoats at all times, which was exhausting during the humid weather of mid-June. Like its sister 28th

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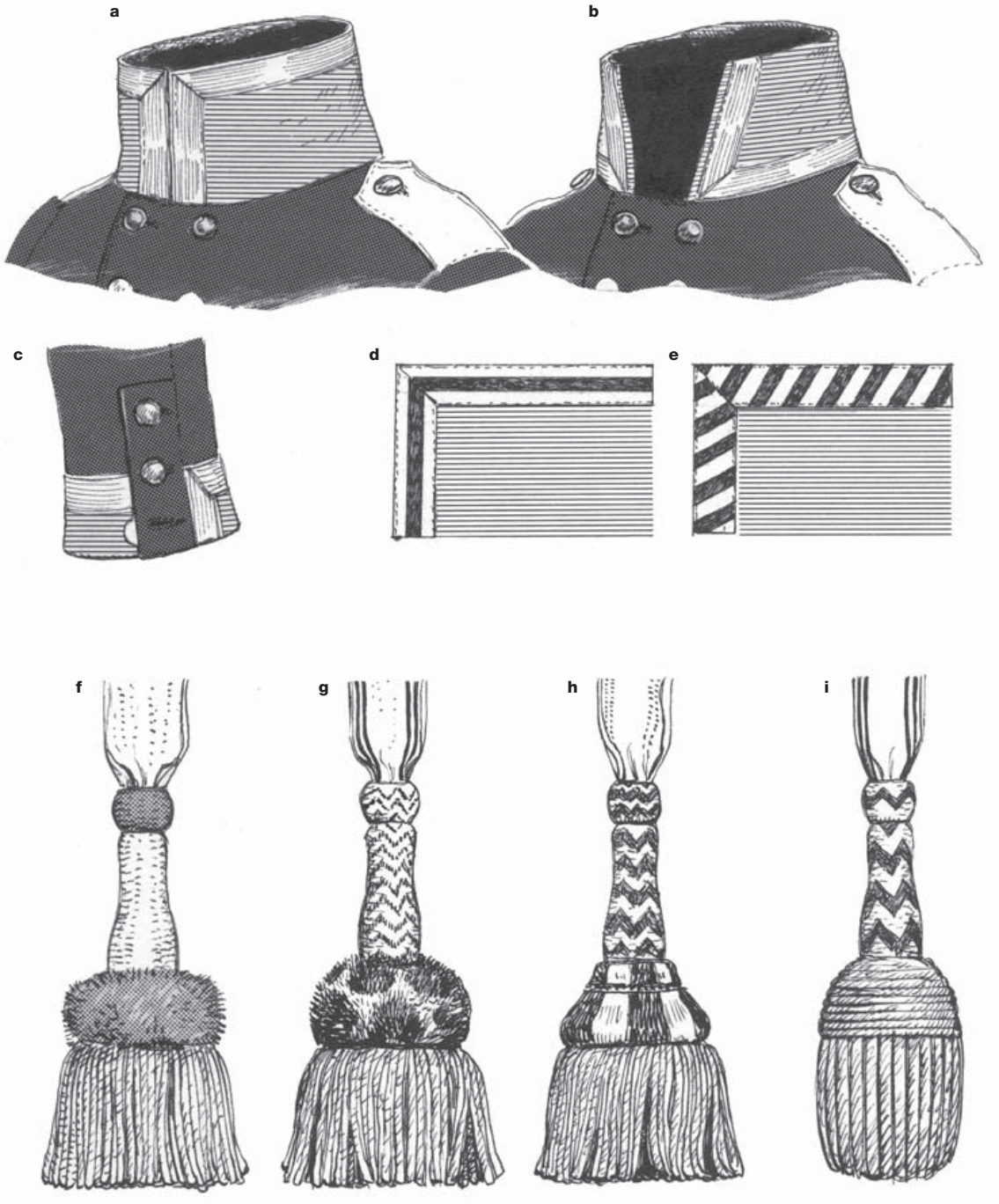
Prussian army rank insignia:



(a) NCO's collar, 1814 coatee; (b) NCO's collar, 1808 coatee – the closed-collar 1814 pattern would become general issue only after Waterloo; (c) NCO's cuff; (d) & (e) silver and black NCO's lace patterns, line and Landwehr.

Troddeln **bayonet knots 1808–16, white and black: (f) rankers; (g) NCOs; (h)** ***Ehrentroddel*** **'honour knot' for veterans of 1806 campaign; (i) silver-and-black officers'** ***portepee.*** **(Drawings courtesy Gerry Embleton)**

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Inf Regt, the 29th were well equipped and armed from French stocks, though as usual lacking shortswords and bayonet scabbards.

C2: Militiaman, 3rd Westphalian Landwehr Infantry Regiment

Poorly trained and inadequately equipped militia of the Landwehr made up a substantial part of the Army of the Lower Rhine. Most seem to have worn field caps and variations on this *Litewka* coat in Prussian blue, but other colours and garments were not unknown. The 'Landwehr cross' badge in white metal was common to all militia, but provincial colours were often displayed in cap bands, piping and coat facings, and seniority by shoulder-strap colours. (Confusingly, Westphalian Landwehr are illustrated with green facings, while the line units were allocated pink.) Minimal equipment was usual, and canvas haversacks or 'bread-bags' were cheaper and easier to provide than knapsacks. This teenage 3rd Bde militiaman has the old 1782 Prussian musket.

Theory, and practice... The 28th Inf Regt was formed from the white-coated regiments of the Grand Duchy of Berg (left). The new Prussian uniform is shown (right) as worn by a fusilier of the 3rd Bn, with pink Westphalian facings and black leather equipment. However, this was not issued in time for the Waterloo campaign, so the new Prussian regiment went to war wearing the old Confederation of the Rhine uniform – see Plate C1.

C3: Trooper, 5th Dragoon Regiment

This trooper of the Corps reserve cavalry – identified by his black collar, cuff piping and shoulder straps as from the former Brandenburg Regt – wears the dragoon's standard field uniform of a *Litewka* coat in a dark sky-blue shade. During this pause on the march he has taken off his cumbersome covered shako and put on his old-style field cap, in grey with a black band (few men had received the new 1814 cap by June 1815). He is one of the 20 'flankers' per squadron to be issued a carbine.

D: II ARMY CORPS; THE MARCH TO WAVRE, 17 JUNE

D1: Gunner, 6-pounder Foot Battery No. 34

Torrential rain turned the country lanes into quagmires, and many guns were only being dragged along with great difficulty. The 7th Bde's artillery battery had six British-supplied 6-pdr guns and two 7-pdr howitzers. This gunner wears the standard 1814 coatee with the artillery's black facings and red piping, Russian-style gaiter-trousers, and black leather equipment.

D2: Officer, Foot Artillery

Officers of all arms and ranks often wore the grey *Überrock* overcoat when in the field; its red lining, seen at the opened lapels, was common, but the black collar piped with red identifies the artillery, as does the band on his peakless blue field cap. He has removed his silver epaulettes to prevent these expensive items getting damaged or lost. Note the officers' double red stripes on his overalls.

D3: Trooper, Elbe Landwehr Cavalry Regiment

Militia cavalry units wore a wide variety of uniforms and equipment; this shako with peaks at front and rear is reminiscent of that worn by the former Guard Dragoons. The dragoon-style *Litewka* coat was common; here it has collar and cuffs in the light blue of the Elbe river provinces, and the white shoulder straps of the senior unit, since this was the only regiment of its type raised in that area. His black pouch belt has a brass chained picker-and-brush set. Many militia cavalrymen carried lances, though most lacked the skill to wield them effectively in battle.

E: IV ARMY CORPS BEFORE PLANCENOIT, 18 JUNE

E1: Trooper, 6th (2nd Silesian) Hussar Regiment

While the 13th Bde of Bülow's corps form up outside the Bois de Paris, pickets of the Corps reserve cavalry ride off to locate the French skirmish line. This regiment wore the ubiquitous covered shako, but with brass chinscales; a green dolman, with poppy-red collar and cuffs and yellow lace and cording; grey overalls, and black leather belts. A black sheepskin cover with scalloped red edging was worn over the saddle.

E2: Fusilier, 10th (1st Silesian) Infantry Regiment

This soldier has been wearing the V-collared 1808-pattern coatee since he was mobilized for the 1813 campaign, and it is now showing signs of hard use. It has the yellow facings of this province, and the white shoulder straps of the senior regiment. As a member of its 3rd or Fusilier Bn, he has black leather equipment. He is reversing the ramrod of his 1809 'New Prussian' musket, identifiable by its more modern butt profile, shrouded brass priming-pan and French-style barrel furniture.

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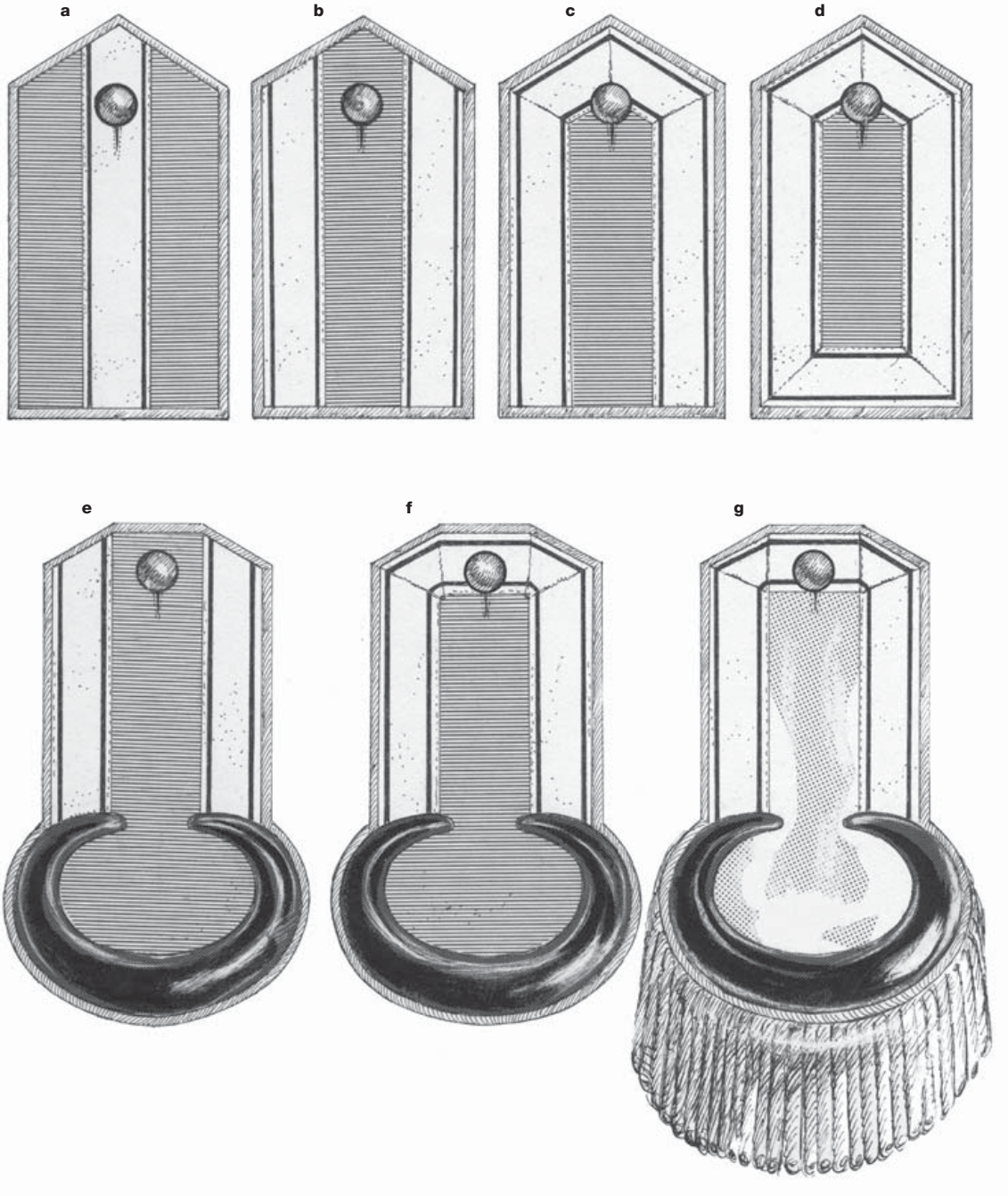
Prussian officers' rank insignia, 1808–15:



(a) Junior officers, 1808–12; (b) captains, 1808–12, but junior officers 1812–14; (c) captains, 1812–14; (d) field officers, 1808–14.

(e) Junior officers, 1813–15; (f) captains, 1813–15; (g) field officers, 1814–15. (Drawings courtesy Gerry Embleton)

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E3: Militiaman, 2nd Neumark Landwehr Infantry Regiment

An archetypal Landwehr soldier, though rather older than most. His cap and *Litewka* coat show the red facings of a Brandenburg unit, with the red shoulder straps of a second-seniority regiment. He is unusually well equipped, with a calfskin knapsack as issued to the line infantry, and crossbelts in blackened leather, though he carries a hatchet in place of a shortsword. He is pouring powder from a torn-open cartridge into the muzzle of his old 1782 musket; its pan and flint are protected from the rain with a wrapped kerchief. Several period pictures show coloured-tassel muzzle plugs used on the march in bad weather.

F: IV ARMY CORPS; STORMING PLANCENOIT CHURCH, 18 JUNE

F1: Musketeer, 18th (1st Westphalian) Infantry Regiment

There was intense fighting for this key point in the village of Plancenoit. The 18th Infantry was formed in 1813 as the 6th Reserve Regt, from a number of W. Prussian and Silesian Reserve battalions. It was cheaply uniformed with tailless grey waist-length jackets; when it received its marching orders in 1815 the former collar and cuff facings had been removed, but the new pink regimental facings had not yet been added. The greatcoat roll hides the single crossbelt supporting the pouch behind his right hip. The regiment were issued with cheap canvas knapsacks, and elderly British Land Pattern muskets.

F2: Officer, Silesian Landwehr Infantry

While this officer is better clothed than most of his men, his purse has still not stretched to buying the new-style coatee with closed collar, the new epaulettes, or the officers' silver sash. His headgear is a field cap in a heavy waxed-cloth cover with a painted Landwehr cross; its tall, semi-rigid appearance is taken from a surviving example.

F3: Musketeer, 15th Infantry Regiment

This soldier still wears the plain grey field cap and short-cut jacket issued in 1813 to the antecedent 3rd E. Prussian Reserve Bn, hence the dull orange collar facing and yellow shoulder straps. His equipment is like that of F1, but with the addition of a canvas 'bread-bag' on his hip, and his musket is the Prussian 1782 pattern.

G: III ARMY CORPS; WAVRE, 18–19 JUNE

G1: Musketeer, 31st Infantry Regiment

Formed from the 2nd Infantry of the former Russo-German Legion, this regiment was taken into the Prussian line just ten weeks before Waterloo. It retained its war-worn old green Russian-style uniforms with madder-red facings, and the *kiwer* shako with white cords and a brass grenade badge, as also displayed on the cartridge pouch flap. The woollen cockade was red at the front and black behind. The German Legion had received British muskets throughout.

G2: Gunner, 6-pounder Horse Battery No. 18

This unit also came from the Russo-German Legion, and had Russian ordnance. The shako differs from the infantryman's in having brass chinscales, red cords and a crossed-cannon badge. The badge is repeated on the small pouch, carried on a buff-coloured belt. The coatee has pewter rather than brass buttons; it is faced in black piped with red, and has black-edged green turnbacks rather than the madder-red of the infantry coatee. His sword may be from captured French stores.

G3: Trooper, 7th Uhlan Regiment

This newly raised lancer regiment typifies the incomplete reorganization of the cavalry in spring 1815: he wears a lancer's *tsapka* cap, but a hussar dolman, in red with dark blue facings and white cording and lace. The regiment had black sheepskin saddle covers with scalloped red edging.

H: NORTH GERMAN FEDERAL ARMY CORPS, JULY

H1: Musketeer, Waldeck Line Infantry Battalion

In 1813 a new contingent was raised to replace men who had perished in Russia with the 6th Regt of the Confederation of the Rhine. They were supplied with this uniform of French 1812 pattern, in white with light blue collar, plastrons, straight three-button cuffs, and piping on the turnbacks. The French crossbelt equipment included bayonet scabbards, but no shortswords; the muskets too were French, but in 1815 each man received only a handful of cartridges.

H2: Musketeer, Hessian Infantry Regiment 'Kurprinz'

The Duke of Hesse-Kassel was pro-Prussian, and dressed his troops accordingly – in fact, when he re-raised his army in 1813–14 they received new 1814-pattern Prussian uniforms before most of the Prussian Army. This soldier of the 'Prince Elector Regt' in the trenches before Mézières wears Prussian-style fatigue dress: the new 1814 field cap in plain grey, a matching under-jacket with sleeves temporarily attached at the shoulders, and Russian-style trousers. His coatee hangs on the gabions behind him: Prussian blue, with yellow facings, red shoulder straps and pewter buttons. His crossbelt equipment, including a bayonet scabbard, is Prussian; his French musket is from former Westphalian army arsenals.

H3: Musketeer, Anhalt-Dessau Line Infantry Battalion

In 1813, Anhalt re-raised its contingent to the 5th Regt of the Confederation of the Rhine. In Germany green was normally reserved for elite rifle-armed units, but this state issued its line companies with green single-breasted coatees faced in red. He has laid aside his Prussian covered shako, blackened Prussian crossbelt equipment with a British bayonet scabbard, and British musket.

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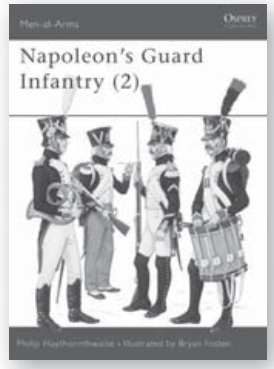

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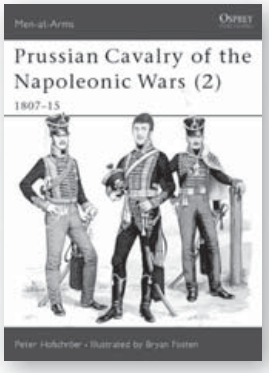

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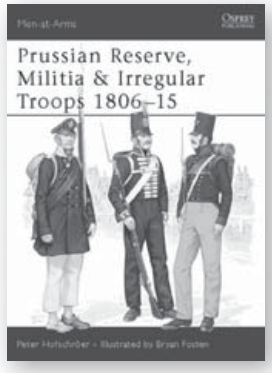

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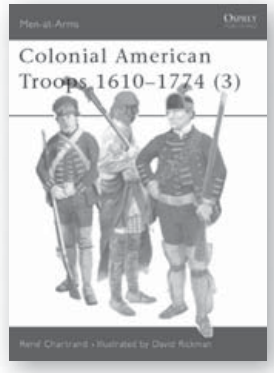

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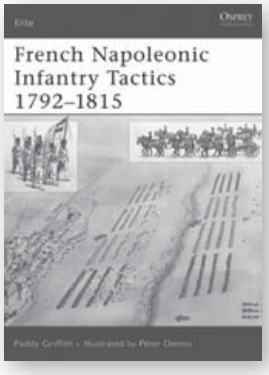

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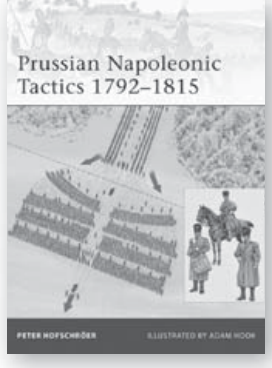

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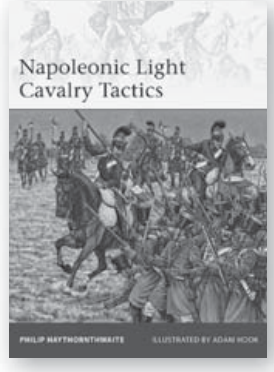

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Blücher famously spent the final stage of the battle of Ligny pinned under his fallen horse after leading a charge by Gen von Roeder's I Army Corps cavalry brigades in response to the breakthrough by the Old Guard. The dramatic scene of his peril, guarded by Maj Count von Nostitz, was a gift for artists.